

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS



For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
LIBRARY

Regulations Regarding Theses and Dissertations

Typescript copies of theses and dissertations for Master's and Doctor's degrees deposited in the University of Alberta Library, as the official Copy of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, may be consulted in the Reference Reading Room only.

A second copy is on deposit in the Department under whose supervision the work was done. Some Departments are willing to loan their copy to libraries, through the inter-library loan service of the University of Alberta Library.

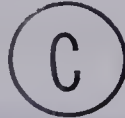
These theses and dissertations are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the author. Written permission of the author and of the Department must be obtained through the University of Alberta Library when extended passages are copied. When permission has been granted, acknowledgement must appear in the published work.

This thesis or dissertation has been used in accordance with the above regulations by the persons listed below. The borrowing library is obligated to secure the signature of each user.

Please sign below:

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
THEME, TECHNIQUE AND IMAGERY IN LOLITA

by



CHERYLYN SMITH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta

September 1, 1968

ABSTRACT

This thesis will involve an examination of story, theme, technique and imagery in Nabokov's Lolita. It will deal briefly with the extremes of critical praise and condemnation which were voiced when the book was first published, and will then proceed to study the book itself in an attempt to determine wherein lies a just critical evaluation of it. Chapter I will deal with the quest story at the heart of the novel, with the themes which emerge from this story, and with the relationship of the story and themes to society and society's early rejection of Lolita on the charge of pornography. The story is one which explores a man's obsessive passion for a demoniac young girl whom he sees as the embodiment of the essence of beauty and timelessness. Lolita is the recounting of the protagonist's attempt to possess completely something which cannot be possessed at all. The way in which this obsessive relationship is rendered will be examined in Chapter II in a study of technique, concentrating largely on Nabokov's "rococo" style and language, the novel's underlying patterns, realism and comic vision. Chapter III will treat of the imagery used by Nabokov as a reinforcement of and vehicle for his story and theme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	1
I STORY AND THEME	6
II TECHNIQUE	41
III IMAGERY	72
CONCLUSION	97
FOOTNOTES	102
BIBLIOGRAPHY	109

INTRODUCTION

Criticism of Nabokov's Lolita has tended to consist of extremes of either enthusiastic acceptance or total repugnance. Thus Robert Hatch says, "the hours I spent with Humbert Humbert were achingly tedious. . ."¹ while Granville Hicks speaks of Nabokov's "startling but irrefutable insights," his "well-aimed satire," "unpredictable humor" and "superb craftsmanship."² Julian Moynahan has gone so far as to suggest that "It is probably not too much to say that there is no interesting fiction being turned out today that is not, in the inflections of its style and in its handling of contemporary American motifs, substantially indebted to 'Lolita'."³ Orville Prescott, on the other hand, pronounced Lolita "highbrow pornography" and said: "There are two equally serious reasons why it isn't worth any adult reader's attention. The first is that it is dull, dull, dull in a pretentious, florid and archly fatuous fashion. The second is that it is repulsive." Mr. Prescott goes on to say that "Humbert's prose style is self-consciously ornate and wonderfully tiresome," "most of his jocularity is forced and flat," his attempts at farce are "painfully inept" and "[w]hen mental illness eliminates the ability to choose. . . there is little left for the novelist to discuss." In addition, Mr. Prescott feels that the book is disgusting because it is the record of a perversion which contains some of the pervert's enthusiasm.⁴

Kingsley Amis joins Prescott in declaring Lolita "thoroughly bad in both senses: bad as a work of art, that is, and morally bad--though certainly," he adds, "not obscene or pornographic."⁵ Conversely it is a conviction that Lolita is pornographic which has led Douglas Woodruff, and others, to claim that parts of Lolita "can only be characterized as filthy. . ."⁶ and to agree with Robert Pitman of the Sunday Express, who says, "Lolita is not just another of the seamy sex-laden books that publishers sometimes label 'controversial'. It is one of the most extraordinary pieces of pornography ever written. However could a publisher think of issuing such a book?"⁷

Such pronouncements as those of Prescott, Amis, Pitman and Hatch show a strong personal dislike of remarkable intensity, and this vehemence would appear to be characteristic of most of those who are opposed to the book. A reviewer for the New York World Telegram (Leslie Hansom) went so far as to say, "there were moments when my whole instinct was to land a Babbitt's righteous punch on the super-civilized nose of the author. . . ."⁸ Because of all the strong feelings aroused by this book, there has been little said that can really be trusted. Whether through ire or defensive enthusiasm, reviewers have tended to overstate their cases.

The publishing history of the novel has also been a controversial one. As Newsweek recalls, "when offered the manuscript, Simon and Schuster, Inc., wouldn't publish it because Mrs. Max L. Schuster warned her husband, 'I won't

have my name on that dirty book." ³9 Other American publishers turned it down also, and thus Nabokov had it brought out through Olympia Press in Paris, a publishing house which has dealt with erotica that could not be published elsewhere. Maurice Girodias, Nabokov's first publisher, says, "I sensed that Lolita would become the one great modern work of art to demonstrate once and for all the futility of moral censorship, and the indispensable role of passion in literature."¹⁰ That the futility of censorship and the necessity of passion in literature were not, in fact, demonstrated immediately, may explain the fact that the book was banned in France upon the instigation of the British Home Office, which was disturbed at the trickle of copies which was entering the United Kingdom.

When the question of a British firm's publishing the book was raised, a storm of controversy arose, even among many who had not read Lolita, and there were political ramifications for publisher George Weidenfeld, a member of the Conservative Party, while the marital problems of publisher Nigel Nicolson were dragged through the press. In the meanwhile, customs officials quietly allowed Lolita to enter America, and, shortly after, Nabokov found an American publisher in G.P. Putnam's Sons.

That the book was not understood even by some who were willing to publish it, is borne out by what publishers in Japan and Sweden did to it. There was a Japanese edition which so obviously failed to grasp the sexual point of the

book that it showed a picture of Lolita on the cover with what Nabokov has described as "thunderously large breasts."¹¹ The Swedish edition printed nothing but the 90 pages of sexual scenes. Even Time magazine would appear to have missed the point behind Lolita when it stated that its guess was the movie would star Brigitte Bardot and Maurice Chevalier.¹²

To add to the confusion, one rather typical critic tried to find an acceptable moral in what many believed to be an unacceptable book. He determined that there were three: that America may secretly deprave many young girls, that the American Scene is hopelessly vulgar, and that youth can survive the worst abuses.¹³ That the reviewer misunderstood Humbert's tendency to solace himself with an exaggerated view of Lolita's depravity, that he failed to see Nabokov/Humbert's love for America, and that he missed the point that Lolita never does win through to real happiness, only illustrates the peculiar kind of myopia with which readers of this book appear to have been afflicted.

Similarly short-sighted is the view taken by Alan Pryce-Jones, who states that the world of Lolita is static, that the "moral of it all" is "do not expect to escape the consequences of your actions," and that there is no struggle in Lolita as both "victims acquiesce, and only one complains."¹⁴ His final pronouncement is that "Where the book fails is in the total lack of affection shown to every one in it. Humbert is a sniveler, Lolita a tigress not the less formidable for being only twelve years old; everyone is more or less ridicu-

lous. And the book itself is designed as a prolonged wail."¹⁵

In the chapters which follow, this study will deal with many of these pronouncements, discussing first the love story at the heart of the book, the themes which emerge from this story, and the relationship of the story and themes to society and society's early rejection of this book on the charge of pornography. Technique and the over-all poetic matrix created through imagery will then be considered. When Lolita is thus examined closely, it must become apparent that there is a reasonable middle ground which may be taken in discussing the book. To rave indiscriminately in its praise is no less unjust than to dismiss it out of hand.

I

STORY AND THEME

In his article on the plot of Tom Jones¹⁶ R.S. Crane states that the quality and effect of a novel depend on a composite of three elements: what is rendered, the "linguistic medium" in which it is rendered, and the manner or technique of rendering. In keeping with this concept, this chapter will deal with the first of the three elements which combine to create the effect obtained in Lolita. This first element, that which is rendered, is, in this case, the story of Dolores Haze and her aging lover, and the theme which develops out of this story.

Simply told, Lolita is the tale of a man haunted by an unresolved romance in his youth, as a result of which he is cursed by a pathological desire for nymphets, a particular kind of demoniac little girl between the ages of ten and fifteen. The protagonist, a European of mixed racial background, pursues a desultory scholarly career punctuated by confinements in various institutions for the insane. After a marriage to a pseudo-nymphet (which was meant to be a hygienic safety valve) and his subsequent divorce, Humbert goes to America to take up a legacy left him by an uncle in the perfume business. It is in America, after several other nervous breakdowns, that Humbert meets the reincarnation of his earlier sweetheart and becomes first the boarder, and then the husband of her mother. He contemplates the many oppor-

tunities available for a stepfather to fondle his step-daughter but soon finds that the child's mother has plans for sending her daughter away to boarding school. Under the stress of this bad news Humbert contemplates murder but finds himself incapable of it--at least at such a time and under such circumstances. Although he eschews violence of this sort, he is nevertheless morally responsible for wife's death soon after, for it is upon learning of his passion for her daughter that Charlotte Haze Humbert runs out of the house and is struck down by a car. After this, all things seem possible to Humbert, who collects his step-daughter from her summer camp and starts out with her on a long tour of the United States.

Humbert's plan was to drug and use the body of Lolita without infringing upon her chastity. However, she has already been debauched by the son of her camp mistress, and it is she who seduces Humbert the first night they are alone together. After this there is no drawing back; Lolita's rash curiosity has led to a kind of captivity under Humbert, who uses her fear of detention homes to keep her subservient and to make her allow him to assuage his lust by using her (unwilling) body. After a mad trip around America, a winter's stay in the East at Beardsley College and another more desperate trip West, Lolita manages to escape the custody of her possessive lover by running away with another man who has a similar perverse liking for little girl-children. After two long years without her, Humbert finally hears from Lolita, who is now married, pregnant and in need of money. He gives

her money, finds out the identity of the man who had taken her away from him two years before, then finds and kills his old rival. Humbert says¹⁷ that the book Lolita is to be released after Lolita is dead; it is a statement meant to immortalize his lost love and in some way make up to her for the lust inflicted upon her and the destruction of her childhood. As we learn from the fictitious introduction, both Humbert and Lolita have died since the completion of the book--he from coronary thrombosis, and she in giving birth to a still-born baby girl.

In his afterword to the book Nabokov says, "The first little throb of Lolita went through me late in 1939 or early in 1940, in Paris. . . . As far as I can recall, the initial shiver of inspiration was somehow prompted by an ape in the Jardin des Plantes who, after months of coaxing by a scientist, produced the first drawing ever charcoaled by an animal: this sketch showed the bars of the poor creature's cage" (282).

In the novel which grew out of this initial "shiver of inspiration" Humbert is a pervert locked in the cage of his own lust; he is horribly cruel, ignominiously groveling, ludicrous and disgusting, and he sees himself as a monster. He says he has a "cess-pool of rotting monsters" (43) behind his slow boyish smile; he talks of his "awkward, aching, timid claws" (53); and he calls himself a sad-eyed degenerate cur who is clasping the boot which will presently kick him away (57). Elsewhere he is a humble hunchback abusing himself in the dark (59), and an incubus (66); he has the rattles

of a rattle-snake (71) and he is a devil (107). He calls the sensualist in himself a great and insane monster (115), and at other times he says he is "nature's faithful hound" (125), a fairytale vampire (128), a ravenous bulk with tentacles (120), and a captured beast thrashing in anguish in the meshes of the game devised by Quilty (227). Finally, he describes himself as a pentapod monster (259) whose smothered memories are limbless monsters of pain (259). Much of Humbert's imagery is self-deprecating in a way which shows his ugly side, as in the examples cited. But in addition to the self-derogation through which Humbert presents himself as a beast, one must keep in mind the gentle timidity of the man with the sad eyes and poet's appreciation of ineffable beauty. Humbert is a man searching for love and beauty, for the timeless never-never-land of youth, for immortality--for the never-to-be-had. And as Gene Baro says, "Humbert Humbert knew that one's destiny depends in great part upon one's vision of the beautiful."¹⁸

For all his ignoble perversity, Humbert is still a man in love with the beautiful past as it was embodied in his childhood sweetheart, Annabel Leigh. His treatment of Dolores Haze is basically his desperate attempt to regain what has been irretrievably lost; and because of the hopeless irretrievability of the past, and because Humbert cannot escape its magic, he is (as he must be) destroyed by it in the end.

In choosing a name for his protagonist Nabokov says

he had this in mind:

The double rumble is, I think, very nasty, very suggestive. It is a hateful name for a hateful person. It is also a king-ly name, and I did need a royal vibration for Humbert the Fierce and Humbert the Humble. Lends itself also to a number of puns. And the execrable diminutive 'Hum' is on a par, socially and emotionally, with 'Lo' as her mother calls her.¹⁹

Humbert is very nasty, very hateful. But there is more to him than that. He is grotesque Humbert the Humble as well as cruel Humbert the Fierce, and, in addition to both, he is the artist and madman, the creature of infinite melancholy who alone is able, as Humbert says, to distinguish the nymphet.

The temptation is usually for critics to proclaim Humbert a beast and/or a poet and to leave the matter at that. Lionel Trilling and Denis de Rougemont have gone further, however. Both point out²⁰ the similarities between Humbert and the literary "passion-lover." The passion-lover in literature is marked by obsessiveness, masochism, ~~a~~ noble subservience to an ideal, antagonism to social conventions, and a propensity for making a scandal. As de Rougemont says, "Passion is that form of love which refuses the immediate, avoids dealing with what is near, and if necessary invents distance in order to realize and exalt itself more completely."²¹ In other words, true passion cannot exist in a world where everything is permitted. Today adultery only leads to commonplace liaisons or a commonplace divorce, but the unavailability of a young girl is one of the few taboos (along with that of incest) still strong enough to constitute the scandal of the twentieth-century passion lover. Humbert and Lolita are outside society and Lolita is a perfect "cruel mistress,"

11

just as Humbert is every inch the deranged lover. As a lover he is the subject of his lady, rather abject, and in grave discomfort owing to his tortured state of mind. Lolita is usually cold and disdainful; secrecy and jealousy mark the love affair, and both Humbert and Lolita are subject to the whims of a capricious god (Humbert's McFate). In keeping with the pattern of the old tale of passion, both Humbert and Lolita end suitably in death.

In addition to such ear-marks of the passion story, de Rougemont points out a number of incidental similarities between Lolita and the Tristan and Iseult legend. Among these are the early death of the mother, the conflict of frustrated love, the fleeing from the world, the attack on marriage, the end in death, and even such little details as the state of trance in the avowal scenes of both, and the love philtre in the Tristan legend which becomes the sleeping pill in Lolita. Finally, as the beloved is usually described with great lyrical beauty in this particular kind of tale, so Lionel Trilling says that "in recent fiction no lover has thought of his beloved with so much tenderness. . . . no woman has been so charmingly evoked, in such grace and delicacy as Lolita. . . ." ²² Humbert is a passion-lover; he is even, in a sense, a modern Tristan, and thus is not merely a beast. Nor is he merely a poet, but rather one who has perceived ineffable beauty and who has become a deranged lover and a madman in a situation which is a hideous parody of the old world of courtly love.

To pursue further the matter of taboos as necessary

to passion, it is interesting to note that Nabokov himself wrote at the start of The Waltz Invention:

A ghost alone is free,
But men should always feel a boundary,
Material fences that affirm existence.²³

Perhaps even more striking, Nabokov defines (in The Gift) what he calls "the triple formula of human existence" as being that of "irrevocability, unrealizability, [and] inevitability."²⁴ It is this triple formula, the triple bounds of mankind, which constitutes so much of the power behind the novel Lolita. The past with its wrongs, its mistakes and its losses can never be relived or undone, Lolita can never be had (although her body can be), and it is inevitable from the start that even that much must be lost before long.

To pursue for the present the idea of the triple formula, one is brought to three different poems which are very much a propos this novel, the first of which is "Annabel Lee" by Edgar Allan Poe. Nabokov chose to call Humbert's first and fatal love Annabel Leigh and to use Poe's poem for his own purposes in Lolita. Thus Humbert begins his first address to the reader by saying, "In point of fact, there might have been no Lolita at all had I not loved, one summer, a certain initial girl-child. In a pryncedom by the sea" (11). Not only does Nabokov's "pryncedom by the sea" echo Poe's "kingdom by the sea" in "Annabel Lee," but the poem in its entirety is used by Nabokov as the archetype for his story of his Annabel, and even motifs are carried over by him. As is stressed so often when Lolita is heartless and unmoved,

her precursor "lived," in the words of Poe's poem, "with no other thought/ Than to love and be loved by me." Moreover, "She was a child and I was a child,/ In this kingdom by the sea. . . ." And this shared youth too is stressed by Humbert with morbid awareness as he contrasts his first love, when he was a faunlet himself, with this second passion, by the time of which he has been transformed into "a heavy-limbed, foul-smelling adult. . ." (129).

Further, the love which "the winged seraphs of Heaven/ Coveted her and me" in "Annabel Lee" has become twisted into Humbert's sad exhibit number one for the jury: "what the seraphs, the misinformed, simple, noble-winged seraphs, envied . . . this tangle of thorns" (11). In Poe the kinsmen separated the two just as they do in Nabokov. Both Annabels die, and both poets remain ever bound to the soul of the lost beloved. And here again Nabokov has used Poe to advantage. Poe says in his last verse:

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride
In her sepulchre there by the sea --
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Humbert also calls Lolita his life and his bride, and his story is that of a man who lies by the reincarnation of his lost love, only to discover that even this reincarnation is totally unattainable, being shut off from him as if in a tomb or sepulchre.

This leads into the second poem which illustrates to

some extent the world of unrealizability into which Humbert enters upon attempting to regain Annabel through a totally different type of nymphet. On this, Elizabeth Janeway says, "I can only say that Humbert's fate seems to me classically tragic, a most perfectly realized expression of the moral truth summed up in the sonnet that begins, 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame/ Is lust in action': right down to the detailed working out of Shakespeare's adjectives, 'perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame.'"²⁵ The sonnet (number 129) runs in its entirety:

Th' expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action, and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
 Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight,
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had
 Past reason hated as a swallowed bait,
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad.
 Mad in pursuit and in possession so,
 Had, having, and in quest, to have extreme,
 A bliss in proof and proved, a very woe,
 Before a joy proposed behind a dream.

All this the world well knows yet none knows well,
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

This describes, I believe, a good deal of the particular kind of suffering experienced by Humbert, and a good deal of what Humbert is like. He suffers from two diseases, nympholepsy and acute consciousness. It is through his consciousness that Humbert knows he is suffering, grotesque and horribly funny. Much more important is the nympholepsy which emerges as the theme of the book. As John Hollander (and the dictionary) define it, nympholepsy is "a frenzy of attachment to an unattainable object." And, as Mr. Hollander goes on to point out, Lolita is "elusive, perverse, and, above all, transient

(each nymphet has but a few years of affinitive power)."26

Moreover, Humbert can never really reach her. As he recalls at the end, he had once overheard her remarking on death and it had occured to him,

that I simply did not know a thing about my darling's mind and that quite possibly, behind the awful juvenile cliches, there was in her a garden and a twilight and a palace gate--dim and adorable regions which happened to be lucidly and absolutely forbidden to me, in my polluted rags and miserable convulsions: for I often noticed that living as we did, she and I, in a world of total evil, we would become strangely embarrassed whenever I tried to discuss something she and an older friend, she and a parent, she and a real healthy sweetheart, I and Annabel, Lolita and a sublime, purified, analyzed, deified Harold Haze might have discussed--an abstract idea, a painting, stippled Hopkins or shorn Baudelaire, God or Shakespeare, anything of a genuine kind. Good will! She would mail her vulnerability in trite brashness and boredom, whereas I, using for my desperately detached comments and artificial tone of voice that set my own last teeth on edge, provoked my audience to such outbursts of rudeness as made any further conversation impossible, oh my poor bruised child. (259)

The utter hopelessness of Humbert's desire for total possession of Lolita is illustrated dramatically in a number of the more ugly scenes in this book. Humbert, who could say, "My only grudge against nature was that I could not turn my Lolita inside out and apply voracious lips to her young matrix, her unknown heart, her nacreous liver, the sea-grapes of her lungs, her comely twin kidneys" (151)--this Humbert had to content himself with Lolita sitting on his lap, "a typical kid picking her nose while engrossed in the lighter sections of a newspaper, as indifferent to my ecstasy as if it were something she had sat upon, a shoe, a doll, the handle of a tennis racket, and was too indolent to remove" (151).

She had entered my world, umber and black Humberland, with rash curiosity: she surveyed it with a shrug of amused distaste; and it seemed to me now that she was ready to turn away from it with something akin to plain repulsion. Never did she vibrate under

my touch, and a strident 'what d'you think you are doing?' was all I got for my pains. To the wonderland I had to offer, my fool preferred the corniest movies, the most cloying fudge. To think that between a Hamburger and a Humberger, she would--invariably, with icy precision--plump for the former. (152)

Through the irony of tone which marks much of this passage, appears the truth of how inaccessible and how untouched Lolita really was. Perhaps even more forcefully are we made aware of Lolita's separateness from Humbert when it is with fading smile that she leaves a conversation with a young boy and walks toward Humbert (171) or when she mimics Humbert's nervous twitch as he comes crawling toward her in grotesque tenderness (176).

That, then, is the unrealizability Humbert must experience. The inevitability, which is partly a result of the very transient nature of the nymphet and partly the workings of fate, is often mentioned by Humbert but is even more cleverly woven into the very framework of the book through the hidden references to Quilty and, more powerfully still, through the foreshadowings of the future which are present all the way through. As early as page eighteen there is a reference to Humbert's arrest, and heart disease is mentioned by page twenty-five. Clare Quilty's name appears by page thirty-one, the dog who causes Charlotte's death appears by page thirty-six, and so on throughout the book. It is not very long before the significance of certain of these references becomes clear, although the main force of this kind of foreshadowing becomes effective only in retrospect. It must be a rare reader who will remember the names of Quilty's plays (as mentioned on page thirty-one) and who will therefore be aware when they reappear from time to time in the story; nevertheless, as un-

likely as this may be, Nabokov (who has stated that he writes for other Nabokovs) is composing his puzzles for just such an intensely conscious person. Even less aware readers will, however, have no difficulty in understanding the implications of references to Aubrey McFate and his machinations, and the powerful foreglimpses of hopelessness or doom which are expressed in such phrases as, "Lo, leaving the dog as she would leave me some day. . ." (110), and "my only regret today is that I did not quietly deposit key '342' at the office, and leave the town, the country, the continent, the hemisphere,-- indeed, the globe--that very same night" (114). A poem by Nabokov, "Ode to a Model," which was written October 8, 1955 (and therefore shortly after Lolita) deals with some of the same ideas and images, and therefore is given here in full.

I have followed you model,
in magazine ads through all seasons,
from dead leaf on the sod
to red leaf on the breeze,

from your lily-white armpit
to the tip of your butterfly eyelash,
charming and pitiful,
silly and stylish.

Or in kneesocks and tartan
standing there like some fabulous symbol,
parted feet pointing outward
--pedal form of akimbo.

Or on a lawn, in a parody
of Spring and its cherry-tree,
near a vase and a parapet,
virgin practising archery.

Ballerina, black masked,
near a parapet of alabaster,
"can one - somebody asked -
rhyme 'star' and 'disaster'?"

Can one picture a blackbird
as the negative of a small firebird?
Can a record run backward,
turn 'repaid' into 'diaper'?

Can one marry a model?
Kill your past, make you real, raise a family,
by removing you bodily ²⁷
from back numbers of Sham?

Like the unnamed model, Lolita is a beautiful symbol, slightly unreal, very definitely "black masked" or unfathomable, and also a small charred firebird turned blackbird by the heat of a disastrous passion. She begins as a "virgin practising archery" (Cupid's variety of archery) and she is "charming and pitiful/silly and stylish." Her youth is turned into a parody of Spring, and she it is who raises the question of turning back and undoing what is done ("Can a record run backward") when, on the second trip West, she sees the nines on the speedometer changing into the next thousand (200). Cliffs or parapets are used as symbols by Nabokov throughout Lolita, and the vase in the ode may recall the urn on which Keats based his ode, with its questions of mutability and permanence and the joy of having and not having--all of which are matters of concern in Lolita. Finally, the question of whether or not one can marry a model and make her real, parallels the question of whether or not one can marry a nymphet and make her real.

But even if Humbert could marry Lolita, would he want to? There tends to be a certain difficulty in following Humbert's attitude toward his small concubine. For example, shortly before Lo is to go to camp Humbert says, "I knew I had fallen in love with Lolita forever; but I also knew she would not be forever Lolita. . . . The word 'forever' referred only to

my own passion, to the eternal Lolita as reflected in my blood" (62). More disquieting yet is his statement:

I must confess that depending on the condition of my glands and ganglia, I could switch in the course of the same day from one pole of insanity to the other--from the thought that around 1950 I would have to get rid somehow of a difficult adolescent whose magic nymphage had evaporated--to the thought that with patience and luck I might have her produce eventually a nymphet with my blood in her veins. . . and, indeed, the telescoping of my mind, or un-mind, was strong enough to distinguish in the remoteness of time a vieillard encore vert--or was it green rot?--bizarre, tender, salivating Dr. Humbert practising on supremely lovely Lolita the Third the art of being a granddad. (159)

After this confession, after the way he has terrorized Lolita into secrecy (154), and his descriptions of such things as his laughing while she sprawled and sobbed (154), his bribery and his fond memory of her face bathed in tears (186), some critics have wondered if there is to be any credence granted his subsequent apparent change of heart and his love for a Lolita who is no longer a nymphet. What exactly does he mean when he says "It was love at first sight, at last sight, at ever and ever sight" (246)? Is Humbert to be believed in the passage which follows,

. . . [T]here she was (my Lolita!), hopelessly worn at seventeen. . . and I looked and looked at her, and knew as clearly as I know I am to die, that I loved her more than anything I had ever seen or imagined on earth, or hoped for anywhere else. She was only the faint violet whiff and dead leaf echo of the nymphet I had rolled myself upon with such cries in the past. . . but thank God it was not that echo alone that I worshipped. . . . I will shout my poor truth. I insist the world know how much I loved my Lolita, this Lolita, pale and polluted, and big with another's child. . . . No matter, even if those eyes of hers would fade to myopic fish, and her nipples swell and crack, and her lovely young velvety delicate delta be tainted and torn--even then I would go mad with tenderness at the mere sight of your dear wan face, at the mere sound of your raucous voice, my Lolita. (253)

In order not to be taken aback at the seeming contradiction in Humbert's attitude to Lolita, it is only necessary that one keep in mind the inconsistency in attitude which round characters in fiction often share with round figures in life, and the nature of the novel as a vehicle for showing progression. Alfred Appel goes even further and maintains that this is a book largely about metamorphosis: 'Lolita changes from a girl into a woman, Humbert's lust changes to love, and his crime (and, one might add, his life) are metamorphosed into art.'²⁸

Lionel Trilling would appear to be in agreement with Mr. Appel as he says we tend to be lenient to a rapist "who eventually feels a deathless devotion to his victim."²⁹

F.W. Dupee says, "Humbert's remorse is more effective for not clothing itself in abstractly moral terms. He feels not that he has betrayed a 'trust' of the kind that traditionally inheres in parenthood, but that he has horribly let Lolita down as lover, friend, and fellow human being, as well as in his capacity as father."³⁰ Mr. Dupee's casual reference to the fact that Humbert's remorse is not clothed in conventional moral terms may explain, even while refuting, what it was that led Kingsley Amis to say there is an atrophy of moral sense evident throughout the book and that Humbert's "moments of remorse are few, brief and unconvincing."³¹

Humbert's callousness is not easily forgotten, and his tendency to self-deception and self-pity may rob certain of his statements of credibility; it should be noted, however, that

the reader is always allowed to glimpse the truth behind statements and situations by means of the irony of the author. As must be the case with a novel so dependent upon the inner workings of the protagonist's mind and his secret actions, the first person is, to all intents and purposes, the only feasible point of view from which the book could have been written. However, as the narrator is an unstable and therefore somewhat unreliable witness with a tendency occasionally to distort what he sees, it is necessary that the reader be allowed to step outside the narrator's mind and study it from time to time. When, for example, Humbert bewails the fact that "There is nothing more atrociously cruel than an adored child" (152), (mentioning this in connection with sexual play), the juxtaposition of Lolita as a child and the way in which Humbert manifests his adoration prepares the reader for grasping the irony of Humbert's next remark: "Oh, do not scowl at me, reader, I do not intend to convey the impression that I did not manage to be happy" (152).

With regard to Humbert's sense of guilt, his total sincerity may not be unblemished when he says something dramatic like "I have hurt too many bodies with my twisted poor hands to be proud of them" (250). He may even be discredited for theatricality when he says,

Unless it can be proven to me--to me as I am now, today, with my heart and my beard, and my putrefaction--that in the infinite run it does not matter a jot that a North American girl-child named Dolores Haze had been deprived of her childhood by a maniac, unless this can be proven (and if it can, then life is a joke), I see nothing for the treatment of my misery but the melancholy and very local palliative of articulate art. To quote an old poet:

'The moral sense in mortals is the duty
We have to pay on mortal sense of beauty.' (258)

There is, however, a low key brevity which would seem to indicate sincerity elsewhere when Humbert says, "then I knew that the hopelessly poignant thing was not Lolita's absence from my side, but the absence of her voice from that concord [of the children at play]" (280).

Both Appel and Charles Mitchell claim that the novel Lolita ends with the same message as Clare Quilty's play "The Enchanted Hunters." When Humbert asks pregnant Lolita to go away with him, he is demonstrating that the illusion of the past (nymphic Lo) and the reality of the present (the Charlotte-like person Lo is becoming) have merged in love--hence reality and illusion merge in love. To examine this further one might do well to examine Mitchell's ideas on the mythic pattern of this story.

To begin with, Mitchell asserts that Humbert is primarily a victim of the inevitable dissatisfaction attendant on life--Lolita is the happiness he seeks as Pip seeks Estella and Gatsby seeks Daisy. As Nabokov says in "Ode to a Model": "'Can one - somebody asked -/ rhyme 'star' and 'disaster'?" As Pip and Gatsby would both agree, the two are perfect co-ordinates. The story of Lolita is therefore the story of a man's quest for transcendence. Humbert's male animality is sexually united to Lolita's female spirit. Out of this Nabokov builds a symmetrical balance of character relationships. Lolita is Humbert's higher nature and Quilty is his lower nature. (Which is why attempting to shoot Quilty was wrong; it was attempting to transcend one's lower nature by one's lower nature, as symbolized by the

phallic pistol.)³² Mitchell suggest further delicate balances among the different characters. Annabel is the ideal past; she is what is wanted. Charlotte is the embodiment of the real future (what Lolita will become) and she is what is obtained. However, just as the death of Annabel led to the marriage to Valeria, so the marriage to Charlotte (with her subsequent death) leads to the obtaining of Lolita. This is a reversal of the earlier Annabel-Valeria movement since, with Charlotte and Lolita, the real is exchanged for the ideal, rather than vice versa. Lolita is a synthesis between the thesis of Annabel, and the antithesis of Charlotte. Moreover, she becomes a cross between Valeria and Charlotte, just as she is the reincarnation of Annabel. All this rather involved diagram-constructing does explain two things; one is Humbert's dreams of Lolita in which "she appeared . . . in strange and ludicrous disguises as Valeria or Charlotte, or a cross between them" (231). The second thing thus explained is Humbert's statement, "I turned off the road, and after two or three big bounces, rode up a grassy slope, among surprised cows, and there I came to a gentle rocking stop. A kind of thoughtful Hegelian synthesis linking up two dead women" (279).

Mitchell's argument becomes even more involved when he points out that Humbert is not only Lolita's father but is, in a sense her mother also; Humbert says at one point "I was always 'with Lolita' as a woman is 'with child' . . ." (100). Besides that, he has been the artistic or creative will which has operated on the Form which is Lolita in order

to create her. As Mitchell says, "Humbert is not only father to her but also mother: his imagination not only conceives her but also gives body to that conception."³³

In so far as that is true, Lolita is a Psyche myth; and Mr. Mitchell claims that Lolita becomes the timeless object thought to bestow immortality, and thus a surrogate divinity. But even more important than the myth of Psyche, in this connection, is the myth of Sisyphus: the archetypal twofold fate "to gain and then to lose"³⁴ is Humbert's destiny. For the sake of completeness in putting forth Mitchell's ideas, it may be added in passing that Lolita and Humbert exchange roles briefly at the Enchanted Hunters Hotel. There Humbert becomes, in Humbert's own words, a trembling "doe" (119) (it rhymes with "Lo") and Lo becomes a hunter and seducer.

Four mythic motifs are to be found in Lolita, according to Mitchell; the first is that of the old man and very young girl; the second is that of the quest hero (and notice the surroundings of forest and castle in which Quilty is slain); third is the Beauty and the Beast; and fourth is the myth of the Garden of Eden which is fatefully lost.³⁵ The presence of these patterns would appear to suggest that there is, indeed, a "mythic seriousness" in Lolita, and that the themes of Nabokov are those of the oldest and best literature--obsession, change, loss and love.

It has been mentioned above that Humbert is Lolita's father. As one seems barely able to see the father for the lover in him, it may seem strange that most critics mention

the incest involved in the relationship here described, or speak of American father-daughter relationships as being typified in this book. An example of a common critical approach to Lolita is this remark by Nancy Hale: "Nabokov has, I believe, in 'Lolita' said something about the nature of parental passion and what our possessiveness does to our children and at the same time to the poor child that weeps within us."³⁶ Lionel Trilling says, "Lolita passes for [Humbert's] daughter, and his brooding concern for her, his jealousy of her interest in other males, his nervous desire to please or to placate her, do not constitute a mode of behaviour very different from that of any American father to his adolescent daughter."³⁷ For her part, her reaction is the typical American teenager's "remote indifference" and "easy acceptance."³⁸ Dupee agrees that the Humbert-Lolita relationship is a horrible parody of family incommunication with the child feeling misunderstood and abused, the parent bantering and bribing, and both experiencing constant rebuffs and cruelties. But this he seems to see as Nabokov parodying the incest theme into ridicule.³⁹ More to the point would appear to be Elizabeth Janeway's opinion that the extreme youth of Lolita is used to shock into attention.⁴⁰ This may, by extension, point to the use Nabokov makes of the implications of an incestuous relationship. If one notes the points at which the father-daughter relationship is made most of, all seem to share a propensity to shock, and all are heavily loaded with irony. When Humbert is attempting to terrorize Lolita into secrecy about their relationship, he stresses his

parental aspect while playing down his role as a possible idol or lover. The chilling horror of his dramatic monologue of persuasion comes largely through such statements as this:

Look, I've a learned book here about young girls. Look, darling, what it says. I quote: the normal girl--normal, mark you--the normal girl is usually extremely anxious to please her father. She feels in him the forerunner of the desired elusive male ('elusive' is good, by Polonius!). The wise mother (and your poor mother would have been wise, had she lived) will encourage a companionship between father and daughter, realizing--excuse the corny style--that the girl forms her ideals of romance and of men from her association with her father.

He goes on to describe Sicilian sexual relationships between father and daughter and concludes with, "I am your father, and I am speaking English, and I love you" (138).

Whatever Humbert may be, he could hardly be emotionally accepted by the reader as Lolita's father did he or Nabokov not make such a point of it. The fact is, Lolita does not bear his name, she had not seen her mother since the wedding, and she had not lived in the same house as Humbert during the very brief Haze-Humbert marriage. Emotionally Humbert is more of a boarder than a father in her eyes, and it is only in irony that she calls him "dad" when he comes for her at camp, but the effect gained by stressing the ugliness of incest justifies the stress placed on it. Thus one gets such brilliant ironic scenes as the interviews with Headmistress Pratt; the irony of the different pieces of advice to parents on raising children which appear throughout the book in such things as the Beardsley Star's "Column for Teens" (169), and the "Let's Explore Your Mind Column" (151); and the horrific effect of little pastiches such as the following: "Following with no show of rapacious haste (even taking time

to wipe my feet on the mat) my school-girl daughter into the house. . . . Brightly pajamaed, jerking down the window shade in Dolly's bedroom. Saturday morning, unseen, solemnly weighing the winter-bleached lassie in the bathroom" (172/3).

There is likewise something vaguely obscene about Humbert's constant references to the stage of sexual development and the measurements of his "daughter." And this is heightened by the fact that it is a distortion of normal parental pride and concern.

Although the father-daughter relationship, as it exists in the middle of the book, creates the effect of ugliness and irony, it is interesting to note that the use made of this relationship changes toward the end. As Dupee says, "If [Lolita] originally called him Dad in bitter irony, she now calls him Dad in sad earnest. But she doesn't mean anything by it, any real affection, and it's too late anyway."⁴¹ The same, or almost the same, thing can be said about Nabokov's use of the parental relationship: by the end of the book Humbert is in sad earnest when he considers himself Lolita's father. To contrast the two effects gained by Nabokov in regard to this relationship, one has only to turn to the murder scene at the end. In his poem which is the death sentence for Quilty, Humbert says, ". . . you stole her/ from her wax-browed and dignified protector/ spitting into his heavy-lidded eye/ ripping his flavid toga and at dawn/ leaving the hog to roll upon his new discomfort. . ." (273). Here the contrast between the ideal and the real, the dignified protector and the hog, which has been used throughout the book,

is used again. But when he says, "To know that this semi-
 animated, subhuman trickster who had sodomized my darling--
 oh, my darling, this was intolerable bliss!" (269), he does
 sound almost equally a distraught lover and a distraught
 father. And when, in response to Quilty's "Who cares?",
 Humbert says "I do Quilty. You see, I am her father" (270),
 Nabokov has come full circle and is using a former source of
 irony as a source of pathos. The only problem is that, as
 with the attendant change from lust to love, this new assertion
 of fatherhood neither totally succeeds nor totally fails.
 It must be an agile reader who is able to accept such a claim
 to parental concern at face value, partly because it is not
 very long since Humbert was asking Lolita to go away with him,
 and partly because Humbert does remain in one's mind as a lover
 first and foremost, and a father only secondarily.

Almost always closely connected with discussion of
 Lolita's family life as an American phenomenon, is discussion
 of Nabokov's treatment of other aspects of American life.
 This treatment of American life will be discussed largely in
 chapter two since it appears more closely linked to Nabokov's
 humor than to his central theme. In saying this I mean to
 refute those who see Lolita as an allegory. Certain writers
 tend to state with glib certainty that Lolita is all about Old
 Europe and Young America, or, as one writer put it: "Little
 Lolita herself (whether the author admits it or not) is an
 analogue of Nabokov's America. . . ." ⁴² This writer goes on
 immediately to say that Lolita is not one little girl but an
 entire society--she is the American Essence. Nabokov's moral

purpose will be discussed at greater length later, but it should be noted here that he has repeatedly stated that he did not write Lolita to express a moral⁴³ and that he dislikes symbols and allegory partly because they smack of Freudianism and partly because they tend to be generalizations.⁴⁴ Likewise his interest in America is not that of a satirist, for he says, "I have neither the intent nor the temperament of a moral or social satirist. Whether or not critics think that in Lolita I am ridiculing human folly leaves me supremely indifferent. But I am annoyed when the glad news is spread that I am ridiculing America."⁴⁵ As Stegner points out, writing is for Nabokov an intellectual game,⁴⁶ and it is as part of this colourful game rather than as satire that America enters Lolita.

This is not to overlook the fact that Lolita is a young American teenager, although in the beginning she was conceived of as French, and an aborted Humbert-like attempt on a landlady's daughter appears in Nabokov's Russian novel The Gift. Lolita is American and the story takes place in America, but there is much more to Lolita than a one-to-one relationship with her homeland. Kingsley Amis, despite his general dislike for this book, says, "I have rarely seen the external ambience of a character so marvelously realized and yet there is seldom more than the necessary undertone of sensuality."⁴⁷ As the crowning beauty of the book, and the object of Humbert's quest, what is Lolita like? What is a nymphet like?

Humbert himself gives a very concise definition for the nymphet. She is a young girl between the ages of nine and fourteen whose nature is "nymphic" or "demoniac" rather than human. Not all little girls between those ages are nymphets; neither are good looks a criterion; and vulgarity, or at least what a given community terms so, does not necessarily impair certain mysterious characteristics, the fey grace, the elusive, shifty, soul-shattering insidious charm that separates the nymphet from such coevals of hers who are incomparably more dependent on the spatial world of synchronous phenomena than on that intangible island of entranced time where Lolita plays with her likes." (18/19)

With Lolita, as with Humbert, one may sense something of her nature and role from her very carefully chosen name.

For my nymphet I needed a diminutive with a lyrical lilt to it. One of the most limpid and luminous letters is 'L'. The suffix '-ita' has a lot of Latin tenderness, and this I required too. Hence Lolita. . . . Another consideration was the welcome murmur of its source name, the fountain name: those roses and tears in 'Dolores'. My little girl's heart-rending fate had to be taken into account together with the cuteness and limpidity. Dolores also provided her with another, plainer, more familiar and infantile diminutive: Dolly, which went nicely with the surname 'Haze' where Irish⁴⁸ mists blend with a German bunny--I mean a small German hare.

("Haze" means "rabbit" in German.)

Lolita is charming and rascally, demoniac, elfin, and a deadly demon. She is also boisterous, critical, distrustful, impatient, inquisitive, negativistic and obstinate, as Charlotte Haze claims (76). Somehow she is "A combination of naivete and deception, of charm and vulgarity, of blue sulks and rosy mirth. . . a most exasperating brat" (135), and Humbert claims that there is a nymphean evil breathing through every pore of this fey little slave flower. According to her Beardsley Headmistress, Lolita's mind wanders, she sighs and is

dreamy, and she is antagonistic, dissatisfied and cagey (177/80). But lists of characteristics will never capture such an elusive quality as Lolita's charm. Humbert attempts to put it down in his diary, and certain of his vignettes are beautiful. For example, he starts one item in his diary this way: "Sunday. Changeful, bad-tempered, cheerful, awkward, graceful with the tart grace of her coltish subteens, excruciatingly desireable from head to foot (all New England for a lady-writer's pen!). . ." (47). Further on he calls her 'the Lolita of the strident voice and the rich brown hair-- of the bangs and the swirls at the sides and the curls at the back, and the sticky hot neck, and the vulgar vocabulary. . . that Lolita, my Lolita. . ." (62).

Images which may stay in the reader's mind are Lolita visiting Humbert "in her dear dirty blue jeans, smelling of orchards in nymphetland; awkward and fey, and dimly depraved, the lower buttons of her shirt unfastened" (85), and Lolita leaving camp Q: "She arrived dragging and bumping her heavy suitcase. 'Hi!' she said, and stood still, looking at me with sly glad eyes, her soft lips parted in a slightly foolish but wonderfully endearing smile" (103). Likewise memorable is the description of Lolita opening her gifts on the eve of the seduction, stalking the open suitcase "with the lentor of one walking under water or in a flight dream," then examining her gifts, after which "she crept into my waiting arms, radiant, relaxed, caressing me with her tender, mysterious, impure indifferent twilight eyes--for all the world

like the cheapest of cheap cuties. For that is what nymphets imitate--while we moan and die" (111).

Better yet is the Lolita who shines through the seduction scene. This Lolita is a "sportive lassie." Humbert says that as he lay feigning "handsome profiled sleep" beside his step-daughter in the Enchanted Hunters Hotel,

I felt her eyes on me, and when she uttered at last that beloved chortling note of hers, I knew her eyes had been laughing. She rolled over to my side, and her warm brown hair came against my collarbone. We lay quietly. I gently caressed her hair, and we gently kissed. . . . As if to see whether I had my fill and learned the lesson, she drew away and surveyed me. Her cheekbones were flushed, her full underlip glistened, my dissolution was near. All at once, with a burst of rough glee (the sign of the nymphet!), she put her mouth to my ear--but for quite a while my mind could not separate into words the hot thunder of her whisper, and she laughed, and brushed the hair off her face, and tried again. . . ." (122)

As Humbert points out, Lolita was an energetic and matter-of-fact little lover and she was "utterly and hopelessly depraved" (123).

This seduction scene may call to the reader's mind a kind of Lolita-in-embryo who appears in Invitation to a Beheading. Emmie, the prison warden's daughter, has Lolita's downy arms, nictating lashes, restlessness, taciturnity, shrillness, abruptness, and ballet-like grace. Also there is a rather notable resemblance between the following action of Emmie and Lolita's whispering of her proposition.

'Give me your ear', said Emmie.

Putting one arm around [Cincinatus] neck, she made a hot moist and utterly unintelligible noise in his ear. 'I can't hear anything' said Cincinatus.

Impatiently she brushed the hair back from her face and again nestled up to him. 49

Nor is Emmie the only prototype for Lolita, since Adam Krug's

young boy, David, in Bend Sinister, also has a suffused smile, blue-veined feet that cling monkey-wise (as Lolita's feet are long toed and monkeyish), and partakes of the perfection of "birds, young dogs, moths asleep, [and] colts. . .",⁵⁰ while Lolita is coltish, a butterfly, symbolically linked with sparrows throughout the book, and described as a little bitch wagging her whole rear end in delight (150).

She is frail but vicious, "flushed and fouled" (116); she has a russet beauty like the Botticelli Venus (247) and she radiates a "languorous glow" (146). Even when she looks plain in the wintry light or is ill, she is adorable, but on the tennis court or gamboling with a pup she is incomparable. On the tennis court she is all innocence, frankness and kindness; Humbert calls her a lucid dear and golden pet, and he is entranced by her ballet droop of mimicked dismay, her grace and her winsome merriment.

But, perhaps, most beautiful of all is this evocation of her:

. . . Lolita always had an absolutely enchanting smile for strangers, a tender furry slitting of the eyes, a dreamy sweet radiance of all her features which did not mean a thing of course but was so beautiful, so endearing that one found it hard to reduce such sweetness to but a magic gene automatically lighting up her face in atavistic token of some ancient rite of welcome. . . . [W]hile the tender, nectared, dimpled brightness played, it was never directed at the stranger in the room but hung in its own remote flowered void, so to speak, or wandered with myopic softness over chance objects . . . Lolita gently beamed at a fruit knife that she fingered on the edge of the table, whereon she leaned, many miles away from me. (260)

After this, one wonders at statements like the following by Nona Balakian: "It is the warped youth of Lolita that is

eventually the cause of her flat, uninteresting, frigid womanhood."⁵¹ And one wonders how there can be readers who feel, as does de Rougemont, that "the absence, here very striking, . . . of any spiritual horizon, reduces the novel to the dimensions of a genre-study of mores in the manner of Hogarth. We share the author's irritations, we acclaim his syntax and his vocabulary, we laugh often, we are never moved."⁵² Or how can one say, as Alan Pryce-Jones does, that "There is literature in whatever Nabokov writes, but no life. . . ."?⁵³

This book is surely both moving and alive, for it is concerned with the intense happiness of moments of a vivid perception of beauty. It is not only funny and sad, but also disturbing, as it struggles to cope with questions concerning man's insanity and the world's absurdity, and of suffering and art. As one critic has said, "There is chaos . . . and there is madness and loneliness and chilling, wild laughter."⁵⁴

If one keeps in mind this beauty and insanity, humour and suffering in *Lolita*, one must quickly realize how greatly this book is unlike pornography. Although *Lolita* may incidentally, and occasionally act as an aphrodisiac, it must be quite obvious that Nabokov is more interested in the spiritual and emotional ramifications of sex, than in the stark physical act or appealing to prurient interest. Quite apart from whether or not one believes Mr. Nabokov when he says he writes for aesthetic bliss and when he says, "Sex as an in-

stitution, sex as a general notion, sex as a problem, sex as a platitude--all this is something I find too tedious for words. Let us skip sex"⁵⁵-- whether or not one believes he is so uninterested in sex, one must admit that he does avoid any detailed descriptions of sexual play, seeming truly to find them "irrelevant matters" in the face of the "greater endeavour" which lures him on "to fix once for all the perilous magic of nymphets" (123).

In their book Pornography and the Law, Doctors Phillis and Eberhard Kronhausen have isolated many of the dominant characteristics of what is generally known as hard core obscenity. As the Supreme Court itself has stated, sex and obscenity are not synonymous and, indeed, sex has always been one of the vital concerns of men.⁵⁶ In order to determine which books are obscene, United States Law uses five general tests: the Social Value Test which judges the over-all appeal of the content, the Prurient Interest Test--to determine to what extent a work appeals to the prurient interest of the average man; the Contemporary Community Standards Test (which must be ineffective with really good works since these are usually ahead of their time); the Hard Core Pornography Test, which attempts to determine if the work was meant to act as an aphrodisiac; and the Variable Obscenity Test, which limits itself to judging under what impression the article has been disseminated.⁵⁷

If one is to apply these tests to Lolita, it becomes apparent that the Japanese edition was pornographic through the method of its packaging and dissemination, and the Swed-

ish edition was obviously meant as an aphrodisiac and, therefore must be judged pornographic according to the Hard Core Pornography Test. According to the Community Standards Test, Lolita was pornographic overseas while it was not in America. Social Value and Prurient Interest are more difficult to determine, and for them one must study the book itself and one's reaction to the book.

As has been seen, the theme of Lolita is that of a quest for beauty which lies deep in the past and which can never be regained. Lolita is the story of a man trapped by his own obsession, and finally brought to the realization that he has destroyed what he desired, and that he loves what he has destroyed. Bedroom scenes are only secondary to this, as they are to Nabokov's triple formula of irrevocability, unrealizability and inevitability which he says is the basis for existence. Sex is also secondary to the evocation of the magic which is Lolita and the monstrousness which is Humbert, and the pathos which is their situation.

It is interesting to note the characteristics of pornography as the Kronhausens have compiled them, and to see how little Lolita bears the marks of any of them. First of all, humour is generally absent (or extremely trite)⁵⁸ in obscene writings, for, as Margaret Mead has noted, "Pornography does not lead to laughter; it leads to deadly serious pursuit of sexual satisfaction divorced from personality and from every other meaning."⁵⁹ Laughter is, however, a major part of the content and tone of Lolita. Obscene books stress

the overt physical side of incest rather than the covert and emotional aspects which are the only aspects of incest which appear to interest Nabokov. As well, obscene books are pure fantasy often going beyond the biologically feasible to present a world where male potency is always at its height and females are so passionate that they need be seduced no more than once in their life times.⁶¹ Obviously *Lolita* does not fit the male dream of the passionate woman. Defloration scenes are usually a part of the make-up of a pornographic book, and these scenes usually have sadistic tendencies and voyeuristic elements.⁶² This is not a part of Lolita.

Concerning pornography, Nabokov himself notes:

Style, structure, imagery should never distract the reader from his tepid lust. The novel must consist of an alternation of sexual scenes. The passages in between must be reduced to sutures of sense, logical bridges of the simplest design. . . . Moreover, the sexual scenes in the book must follow a crescendo line. . . and therefore the end of the book must be more replete with lewd lore than the first chapters.⁶³

This single-mindedness of purpose and crescendo pattern are also mentioned by the Kronhausens, who state that, in addition to being very short, obscene books have very short interstices between the sexual scenes and tend to greater and more elaborate sexual scenes with more and more types of perversion and more participants as the book progresses.

A feature of seduction scenes which is connected with this general pattern of obscenity is "their brevity due to the ease with which the seduction is accomplished. We will therefore not find page after page, or entire chapters, of an 'obscene' book devoted to the hero or heroine attempting

the seduction of his or her lover as is so frequently the case in ordinary fiction."⁶⁴ It is obviously unlikely that one would find hard core pornography in which the heroine remains unseduced as long as *Lolita* does.

There are other marks of pornography such as profaning the sacred, the use of an asiatic or negro participant in the orgies, and the use of taboo words to arouse sexually. In regard to this latter quality, it is interesting to note Earl Walbridge's solemn warning to libraries about buying copies of *Lolita*: "Thousands of library patrons conditioned to near-incest by 'Peyton Place' may take this in stride. However, better read before buying. Although the writer prides himself on using no obscene words, he succeeds only too well in conveying his meaning without them."⁶⁵

The bestiality which is rarely missing in pornography, along with scenes of homo-sexuality or lesbianism, are all markedly absent from *Lolita*. And, as Humbert and Lolita both suffer--as, indeed, Humbert's sufferings arise directly out of his sins--*Lolita* lacks the fantastical aspects of pornography, in addition to lacking pornography's superabundance of scenes describing overt physical sexual activity.

Apart from the Kronhausens' learned observations there are still other more emotional and less scientific criteria against which one can measure the over-all effect of *Lolita*. One of these (which has become a classic) is D.H. Lawrence's claim that "Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it."⁶⁶ As Humbert does misuse sex throughout the book, one might almost forget the scene in the

mimosa grove with Annabel which is both as beautiful and reverent as anything D.H. Lawrence ever wrote; but surely no reader, however forgetful, could fail to realize that Lolita is a fully developed character in this novel. She is seen as a person and not merely an object; moreover, she is an embodiment of beauty, and so no matter how frustratingly sex is abused, Humbert's sexual relations with her are never without meaning. The fullness of the development of Lolita as a character contrasts markedly with the usual object of lust in pornography who is always a flat, undeveloped personality. That this should be so is to be expected, for, as Ludwig Marceuse says, "The genre pornography is distinguished above all by its unreality: existence is reduced to the vital region--and then further to the one which may not be mentioned in public. . . ." ⁶⁷

Another piece of common sense, which has all too often been ignored with regard to Lolita, is this idea expressed by Justice W.O. Holmes writing on the Roth case: "Literature has been a classic form for the dissemination of ideas. When an author describes in minute detail a way of life, the description itself may be mute criticism of that way of life or the conditions which bring it about. . . ." ⁶⁸ Justice Holmes goes on to say that "Literature performs the important social function of exposing all facets of life" ⁶⁹ (Underlining mine).

It may well be (as Leslie Fiedler claims) ⁷⁰ that it is as a blasphemy against the cult of the child in modern society, rather than as pornography, that Lolita was first

banned. In this "cult of the child," which started as a belief in the insight and innocence of the non-adult, the Golden Age which was once placed at the dawn of history is now conceived of as a part of the beginning of life. This eventually becomes a deification of the Id which is socially acceptable even though the child becomes a surrogate for the protest and anti-social impulses which the adult would like to express and is unable to. The child-lover and child-rapist constitute the two sides of the coin of this cult, and if Nabokov escaped offending those who prefer to see children as unfallen, then he was still almost certain to offend those with the suppressed tendencies by which Humbert so blantly professes to be tortured. That this cult is wide-spread in our culture only made it all the more inevitable that there would be some who would be offended. And naturally enough, it was in Great Britain, where the last vestiges of Victorian child worship still cling, that Lolita was most vehemently denounced.

II

TECHNIQUE

The difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique. When we speak of technique, then, we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and, finally of evaluating it.⁷¹

This position taken by the Post-Jamesian extremists is particularly apt in considering Nabokov, since it is one very much in keeping with Nabokov's attitude to his own art. He would be the first to agree with Ortega y Gasset that, "The material never saves a work of art, the gold it is made of does not hallow a statue. A work of art lives on its form, not on its material; the essential grace it emanates springs from its structure, from its organism."⁷² In Lolita, what is this all-important form, and what is Nabokov's technique? This chapter will discuss form and technique in Lolita under the organizing principles of comic vision (the informing principle through which tone is partly established), of style and language, of patterns (the book's involutions of form), and of the tension between the real and the fantastic (which arises mainly out of the tension between novelistic verisimilitude and technique).

It is often the humour or tone of jocularly which is quoted by critics as one of the major features of Lolita.

To such an extent has this been true that the tragic content has been patently ignored by some critics who prefer to counteract shocked response to the subject matter of the book by stressing that Lolita is a very funny book. As F.W. Dupee has said, "A Comic Masterpiece--again and again reviewers have arrived at something like this ultimate tribute without traversing the exquisitely painful ground between the rank necessary purlieus of disgust and horror in Lolita."⁷³ It is the curious relationship between the humour and the horror in Lolita which is so much responsible for the final flavor, character, quality or effect which is the tone of the book, and for this reason, if for no other reason, one would do well to keep it in mind.

Of central importance in Lolita is the fact that Humbert's dilemma, that of attempting to hold in balance the contradictions of his character and the world around him, is both what leads to the tragedy of the book and leads to the comedy. It has been stated in the previous chapter that Humbert suffers from the diseases of nympholepsy and consciousness. It is these two diseases which are responsible for the fact that Humbert loses his balance and is aware of it, and Newsweek quotes Nabokov as saying that humour is really a loss of balance and appreciation of losing it.⁷⁴ In the words of Elizabeth Janeway: "To get [Lolita] Humbert puts himself through a pattern of erotic choreography that would shame a bower-bird. He is grotesque and horrible and unbearably funny, and he knows it."⁷⁵

Two of the rather more humorous scenes in this novel are, in fact, the key scenes--the seduction at the Enchanted Hunters and the murder of Quilty. Although the murder scene is primarily an example of slapstick comedy, the seduction is funny largely through the self-awareness of the protagonist. Humbert is "burning with desire and dyspepsia" (120) lying beside the one thing he wants most in life, but not daring to touch the glimmering nymphet flesh that is so near. He suffers from a whole range of complaints from cold heels to lack of pillow, and he is not so passionately elevated that he is above sneaking back some of Lolita's unfair share of pillow when she raises herself for a moment. All around Humbert's cerebellum the toilets of the hotel are cascading and, as he lies not daring to move, enveloped in mists of longing, he eventually drifts off into what he calls "a melancholy snore" (121). The sustained juxtaposition of passion and deflating circumstances operates throughout the scene from the moment when Humbert places his knee on the bed and is horrified to find Lolita staring at him and calling him Barbara. With typical wit Humbert says, "Barbara, wearing my pajamas which were much too tight for her, remained poised motionless over the little sleep talker" (118). He remains consistently ludicrous right through to the point where Lolita wakes up and he feigns "handsome profiled sleep" and gives "a medicocre imitation of waking up" (122).

A somewhat similar device of contrast between noble

expectations and ignoble actions (with Humbert looking like something of a buffoon) leads to a comic situation shortly after the death of Charlotte. The shocked and bereaved widower is visited by the man who, as Humbert glibly says, "eliminated my wife" (95). The whole scene has been laden with funereal tact but is exploded by Humbert's refusal to follow the rules of the game.

Breathing violently through jet-black tense nostrils, he shook his head and my hand; then, with an air of perfect savoir vivre and gentlemanly generosity, he offered to pay the funeral-home expenses. He expected me to refuse his offer. With a drunken sob of gratitude I accepted it. This took him aback. Slowly, incredulously, he repeated what he had said. I thanked him again, even more profusely than before. (55)

A similar exploding of a conventional situation appears at the very beginning of the book when Humbert finds himself cast in the distasteful role of deceived husband. Humbert's jealousy ("matters of legal and illegal conjunction were for me alone to decide" -28-) becomes more and more ludicrous as "Humbert the Terrible deliberat[es] with Humbert the Small whether Humbert Humbert should kill her or her lover, or both, or neither" (29). Moreover the classic literary situation of confrontation between wife, lover and husband, is viciously burlesqued.

The situation was preposterous and became even more so when the taxi-colonel, stopping Valeria with a possessive smile, began to unfold his views and plans. With an atrocious accent to his careful French, he delineated the world of love and work into which he proposed to enter hand in hand with his child-wife Valeria. She by now was preening herself, between him and me, rouging her pursed lips, tripling her chin to pick at her blouse-bosom and so forth, and he spoke of her as if she were absent, and also as if she were a kind of little ward that was in the act of being transferred, for her own

good, from one wise guardian to another even wiser one; and although my helpless wrath may have exaggerated and disfigured certain impressions, I can swear that he actually consulted me on such things as her diet, her periods, her wardrobe and the books she had read or should. (29)

As may be noted, this scene also constitutes a rather ugly foreshadowing of the Lolita relationship in this talk of the transferring of a ward from one guardian to another. In a grotesque way, Lolita is a ward transferred from the guardianship of Humbert to that of Quilty.

Apart from these few scenes of situation comedy and the macabre slapstick of the murder, most of the humor in Lolita is concerned either with a playing with words or with the rendering of America. Much of the word-play involves a manipulation of Humbert's titles, "Humbert le Bel," "Humbert the Hoarse," "Humbert the Hummer," "Humberger," "Hummer," "Humbertson" and the like. But Humbert also has a facility for the quick witty (and sometimes cruel) remark. Thus he says, "Charlotte, went up to a little table of imitation mahogany with a drawer. She put her hand on it. The little table was ugly, no doubt, but it had done nothing to her" (86). Likewise, when the "enthusiastic Jean Farlow says she has been spying on nature, Humbert's very brief and expressive aside is that spies are usually shot (83). And when Headmistress Pratt finishes haranguing Humbert with a suggestion that Lolita be analyzed, his brief thought, "Should I marry Pratt and strangle her?" (180) is the perfect, although unexpected, expression of the culmination of his growing sense of harassment.

Nabokov's creation of Charlotte, although hardly an embodiment of happy humour, is in its own way a masterpiece. As one critic has remarked, "With her 'principles' which bulk large but weigh little, her vacuous animation, her habit of asserting herself although she has next to nothing in her to assert, Charlotte is the immoral moralist, the loveless romantic, the laughless comic--whatever it is that spoils the party and dampens the honeymoon all across America."⁷⁶ Her letter avowing her love for Humbert is a wierd combination of little girlishness and passion from a very matter-of-fact big woman who is ironically and horribly unaware of where Humbert's affections really lie.

Nabokov's descriptions of motels and restaurants have often been quoted for their wit, and his reconstructions of the meaningless patter of social encounters and the jargon of psychologists and progressive educators have likewise been acclaimed. Nabokov also takes the trouble to incorporate the content of movie magazines, the characteristic blandishments of advertising, and the conventionality of movies into the tapestry of his work.

In the first [kind of movie], real singers and dancers had unreal stage careers in an essentially grief-proof sphere of existence wherefrom death and truth were banned, and where, at the end, white-haired, dewy-eyed, technically deathless, the initially reluctant father of a show-crazy girl always finished by applauding her apotheosis on fabulous Broadway" (115)

Lolita, herself, wittily twists summer camp descriptions into a sinister hint of what camps may (and Humbert says they do) entail. Finally, the middle class with its Gaston Godins and its Charlotte Hazes is delicately probed. All of this is

47

not just another of the themes of the book; rather it is a part of the very rich rococo style of the author which thrives on detail and is particularly stimulated, as Nabokov says, by "pristine vulgarity."⁷⁷ Nabokov obviously delights in his own lavish style, but it is also an expression of his philosophic belief, as a solipsist, that reality is ultimately unknowable. He has said, "Reality is a very subjective affair. I can only define it as a kind of gradual accumulation of information. . . ." ⁷⁸ and it is in keeping with this view of reality that Nabokov delights in detail, oddities, new effects, old effects, and old effects transformed into new effects.

An example of this working through the old and the new in search of the veritable, is the bungling but horrific murder. One example of the kind of thing done in this scene is this excerpt:

All of a sudden I noticed that he had noticed that I did not seem to have noticed Chum protruding from beneath the other corner of the chest. We fell to wrestling again. We rolled all over the floor, in each other's arms, like two huge helpless children. He was naked and goatish under his robe, and I felt suffocated as he rolled over me. I rolled over him. We rolled over me. They rolled over him. We rolled over us. (272)

Nabokov's style is characterized by what Martin Green calls, "its exuberant and recondite vocabulary, highly literary and highly technical at the same time, lavish of foreign phrases, commercial terms, academic turns of speech." As he goes on to say, "It is always elaborate, sometimes formal, in its phrasing and sentence-structure, but far from pompous; indeed its out-spoken desire to perform, to be en-

tertaining and be entertained, makes it at first sight undignified. Its images are extremely clever, its manner consistently self-conscious, its effects all variations on a theme of exaggeration."⁷⁹ As Mr. Green also points out, allusions to present day phenomena are part of this kind of ornamental and playful style which appreciates anything and everything. It is, however, this very quality which has led Kingsley Amis to comment in disgust,

No extract. . . could do justice to the sustained din of pun, allusion, neologism, alliteration, cynghanedd, apostrophe, parenthesis, rhetorical question, French, Latin, anent, perchance, would fain, for the nonce--here is style and no mistake. . . . The end product sadly invokes a Charles Atlas musclem⁸⁰ of language as opposed to the healthy and useful adult.

It is, perhaps, with a similar desire to see more healthy and useful adults that Pryce-Jones complains that "Nabokov, at all times, uses the English language as an undergraduate uses a sports car. He shifts gears, revs noisily, slams on brakes, just to show he can."⁸¹

Nabokov's style is both serious and playful, and it ranges the continuum between. The book itself begins as a prose poem,

Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo, Lee, Ta. She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita. (11)

And much later there is another very lyrical passage which borders on poetry.

"Lo! Lola! Lolita!" I hear myself crying from a doorway into the sun, with the acoustics of time, domed time, endowing my call and its tell-tale hoarseness with such a wealth of anxiety, passion and pain that really it would have been instrumental in wrenching open the zipper of her nylon shroud had she been dead. Lolita! In the middle of a trim turfed terrace I found her at last--she had run out before I was ready. Oh Lolita! There she was playing with a damned dog, not me. (216)

These lyrical passages are, of course, in addition to the three poems which are a part of the book: the whimsical nonsense verse (232), the stark complaint over the loss of Lolita which is, Humbert says, "a maniac's masterpiece" (233/4), and the poem condemning Clare Quilty to death (273) which is a parody of Eliot's "Ash Wednesday."

The arrival at the Enchanted Hunters Hotel is but one of a number of scenes notable for their sustaining of a motif combined with playful wit. As Humbert and Lolita arrive at the "pale palace" of the hotel under its "spectral trees," a row of parked cars, "like pigs at a trough," seems to block access, but a way opens like magic. The motif continued throughout the scene is a dual one of piggish animality and Arabian Nights magic.

"Wow! Looks swank," remarked my vulgar darling squinting at the stucco as she crept out into the audible drizzle and with a childish hand tweaked loose the frock-fold that had stuck in the peach-cleft--to quote Robert Browning. Under the arclight enlarged replicas of chestnut leaves plunged and played on white pillars. I unlocked the trunk compartment. A hunchbacked and hoary Negro in a uniform of sorts took out bags and wheeled them slowly into the lobby. It was full of old ladies and clergymen. Lolita sank down on her haunches to caress a pale-faced, blue-freckled, black-eared cocker spaniel swooning on the floral carpet under her hand--as who would not, my heart--while I cleared my throat through the throng to the desk. There a bald porcine old man--everybody was old in that old hotel--examined my features with a polite smile, then leisurely produced by (garbled) telegram, wrestled with some dark doubts, turned his head to look at

the clock, and finally said he was very sorry, he had held the room with the twin beds till half past six, and now it was gone. A religious convention, he said, had clashed with a flower show in Briceland, and--"The name," I said coldly, "is not Humberg and not Humbug, but Herbert, I mean Humbert, and any room will do, just put in a cot for my little daughter. She is ten and very tired."

The pink old fellow peered good naturedly at Lo--still squatting, listening in profile, lips parted, to what the dog's mistress, an ancient lady swathed in violet veils, was telling her from the depths of a cretonne easy chair.

Whatever doubts the obscene fellow had, they were dispelled by that blossom-like vision. He said, he might still have a room, had one in fact--with a double bed. As to the cot--

"Mr. Potts, do we have any cots left?" Potts, also pink and bald, with white hairs growing out of his ears and other holes, would see what could be done.

"I think it went to the Swoons," said Swine, the initial old clown.

"We'll manage somehow," I said. "My wife may join us later--but even then, I suppose, we'll manage."

The two pink pigs were now among my best friends. In the slow clear hand of crime I wrote: Dr. Edgar H. Humbert and daughter, 342 Lawn Street, Ramsdale. A key (342!) was half-shown to me (magician showing object he is about to palm)--and handed over to Uncle Tom. Lo, leaving the dog as she would leave me some day, rose from her haunches; a raindrop fell on Charlotte's grave; a handsome young Negress slipped open the elevator door, and the doomed child went in followed by her throat-clearing father and crayfish Tom with the bags.

Parody of a hotel corridor. Parody of silence and death. (109/110)

This very typical scene demonstrates what a rococo style is like. Lolita is shown in her three most common aspects: as vulgar, childish and beautiful. The description of enlarged chestnut leaves plunging and playing on white pillars is both beautiful and sexually suggestive. The hunchbacked old Negro who carries their bags is linked with the motif of Humbert as a humble hunchback who abuses himself in the dark (59), and the porter's being a negro ties in with the negro as a symbol of sexual prowess and of primitive

drives and evil, while his decrepitude suggests sex gone seedy. Also, Humbert's calling him "Uncle Tom" opens the memory to Uncle Tom's Cabin with all its associations of the pure little suffering Eva and naughty Topsy, and one is reminded of the slavery of the Negro which is an analogy to the slavery in which Humbert is caught, just as carrying the bags relates to the burden which Humbert carries. (He later does the same sort of thing when he describes a man carrying his tennis racket as if they were "my own dreadful cumbersome sins" -213-.)

That the lobby is full of old ladies and clergymen, and that these are people attending either a flower show or a religious convention, brings in associations concerning beauty and moral perception as well as mortality and the secular adage to "gather ye rosebuds while ye may." As occurs on more than one occasion, Lolita's playing with a dog is used as an act analogous to her relationship with Humbert. And Briceland will remind many readers of the radio show "Baby Snooks" in which Fanny Brice played the young American girl who is always victimizing her "daddums."⁸² (As Alfred Appel notes in mentioning this, Humbert twice calls himself "Daddums.")

In this scene, as throughout his life, Humbert is alone in a crowd (set apart by his exotic taste for nymphets), and he tends to transfer his own qualities (obscenity and clownishness) to those with whom he is talking. He is typically witty and somewhat cruel (in his descriptions of others), and, as usual, he plays with names. The ancient lady swathed

in veils is another of the images which contrast graciousness, wisdom, and peaceful old age with Humbert and his lewd designs. Humbert's signing of his name as "Dr. Edgar H. Humbert" brings into play the many associations with Edgar Allan Poe, which bear a certain fruit considering Poe's love for twelve year old Virginia, and Nabokov's use of his poem "Annabel Lee."

As so often happens in this book, an involuted pattern appears through Humbert's being given room 342, the same number as the home address in Ramsdale. The future of the romance which has not yet begun is foreshadowed as Lolita leaves the dog, and in the next phrase the past is recalled through the reference to the raindrop falling on Charlotte's grave. This latter is also part of the association between Charlotte and Lolita in which Charlotte has died to become Lolita, just as the child Lolita will eventually die to become another Charlotte. Also the incest theme is brought to the fore by reference to the child, on the one hand, and "her throat-clearing," slightly ridiculous, slightly horrific father, on the other. And finally one is left with a parody of reality, silence and death, as all things stand on the verge of becoming "thing-hood" and withdrawn and dead, awaiting Humbert's crime.

This brief analysis may give some idea of the wealth of detail and association connected with Nabokov's style. As for a second aspect of his style, his use of words, here there may be stronger ground for dismay at his "undergraduate" or "muscle-man" type of virtuosity. Nabokov, himself, likes

to say, "After Olympia Press, in Paris, published the book,⁵³ an American critic suggested that Lolita was the record of my love affair with the romantic novel. The substitution 'English language' for 'romantic novel' would make this elegant formula more correct."⁸³ This professed love for the language may explain the naïve enthusiasm with which Nabokov plays with words which he is probably unaware can mean little to readers who have not studied Webster's dictionary as avidly as he himself has. Many of his more difficult words come from scientific disciplines, words like "iliac crest," "gluteal sulcus," "lantigo" and "areolas."⁸⁴ Moreover, he tends to make up words from Latin roots ("praedormitary," "febriculosa," "omnivivacious"), and to use rare words and rare forms of words such as "ghyll" for "gill," "explodent" for "explosive," "drisk" for "drizzling mist" and "chamfrained" for "chamfroned" or "bridled."⁸⁵ Many critics, among them Granville Hicks, Walter Allen, and Lionel Trilling, claim Humbert's tone and language are deliberate effects--and, indeed, it is true that Humbert's self-contempt leads in large part to his strained tone. He, himself, says this tone put his own last teeth on edge, and that it was a result of the falsity of his relationship with Lolita (259), just as when he is most upset (seeing Lolita again, and coming to kill Quilty) he cannot help playing with his "repersonne" nonsense (246, 257). It is not true, however, that Humbert's mode of expression is totally unconnected with that of Nabokov, for Nabokov's other novels are similar in many of these respects. To name only one example, Bend Sinister contains

very difficult prose passages, and the hero of this novel, Adam Krug, is an intellectual snob who uses big words, is witty and has very definite opinions--very much like Humbert and like Nabokov, as he shows himself in Speak Memory. Changes in persons and narrator in Bend Sinister come without warning, and some of the words are beyond all but the most erudite ("if left to pupate quietly in the alluvium of the mind").⁸⁶ It is not difficult to guess what is being said, but it still remains doubtful that the message could not be delivered in a more immediate and effective way. Is it, for instance, really effective for Nabokov to have Humbert speak of young girls who are "incomparably more dependent on the spatial world of synchronous phenomena than on that intangible island of entranced time where Lolita plays with her likes"?

Ethel Strainchamps has collected evidence of Nabokov's foreign use of English, which may be interesting to note, although it hardly constitutes more than a curiosity in the way of criticism. According to this critic, Nabokov has most difficulty with verbals, and hence he says such things as "I was looking forward to surrender myself."⁸⁷ Likewise he tends to use unidiomatic ellipsis ("Why do those people guess so much and shave so little and are so disdainful of hearing aids?" -251-) and he is clumsy with articles ("she would have had, on the top of her perfect form, the will to win. . ."-212-). In addition, he uses "in" for "into" and "if" for "whether," he splits verbs and dangles modifiers.

This is not to deprecate what Nabokov has managed to do with a foreign tongue, and his achievement in this regard has surely been noteworthy. His language is, as Earl Rovit says, "genuinely plastic--vibrantly keyed to the whimsical nuance, the semi-veiled allusion, and a contagious enthusiasm for the joyous sound of words."⁸⁸ The variety and sensitivity of his style and language can only be enjoyed through experience, and when the dissection is over and passages are put back together one is rewarded by such little vignettes as the following:

Sometimes. . . Come on, how often exactly, Bert? Can you recall, four, five, more such occasions? Or would not human heart have survived two or three? Sometimes (I have nothing to say in reply to your question), while Lolita would be haphazardly preparing her homework, sucking a pencil, lolling sideways in an easy chair with both legs over its arm, I would shed all my pedagogic restraint, dismiss all our quarrels, forget all my masculine pride--and literally crawl on my knees to your chair, my Lolita! You would give me one look--a gray furry question mark of a look: "Oh no, not again" (incredulity, exasperation); for you never deigned to believe that I could without any specific designs, ever crave to bury my face in your plaid skirt, my darling! The fragility of those bare arms of yours--how I longed to unfold them, all your four limpid lovely limbs, a folded colt, and take your head between my unworthy hands, and pull the temple skin back on both sides, and kiss your chinesed eyes, and--"Pulease, leave me alone, will you," you would say, "for Christ's sake leave me alone." And I would get up from the floor while you looked on, your face deliberately twitching in imitation of my tic nerveux. (176)

The sophistication with which the involved sentence structure is handled, the immediacy of description and the combination of three different voices, all make this paragraph an example of remarkable control and finesse. The language is clear and apt, and the underlying rhythm is beautifully controlled.

It was earlier pointed out that the rococo style

attempts to assimilate everything it can and to ornament and vary tones; thus it is a kind of potpourri style. This is, indeed, the style of the entire book, which, as Nabokov has pointed out, was written on index cards and not straight through from beginning to end.⁸⁹ The end result is a work consisting of intricate interrelationships, one of the best sustained of which is the recurring appearance of Clare Quilty throughout Lolita. There is mention made of him as early as page thirty-one where a Who's Who in the Limelight gives a brief life and lists his works, all of which are used in other connections later in the book. For instance, he wrote "The Lady who Loved Lightning," and at one point Lolita says, "I am not a lady and do not like lightning" (201). Likewise his play "Strange Mushroom" reappears as the classroom nicknamed "mushroom" at Beardsley, where Humbert has Lolita put her chalky hand under the desk in return for permission to act in another of Quilty's plays, "The Enchanted Hunters." Quilty, the playwright, is mentioned from time to time as being cousin or uncle of the dentist next door in Ramsdale (actually he is a nephew); he is casually mentioned when Charlotte tells Humbert Lolita will be sent to summer camp (60); and he is mentioned briefly again when Humbert and Charlotte meet Jean Farlow at Hourglass Lake. Lolita has two pictures hanging above her bed in Ramsdale. One is of a dark-haired young man with a "drained" (65) look in his eyes who is carrying a tray to his young conquered bride as Humbert will carry coffee to Lolita on their travels. The man's face bears

a striking resemblance to Humbert's face, and Lolita has written "H.H." on the picture. Under it is an ad in which a "distinguished playwright" (Quilty) is smoking a Drome cigarette. It is because the reader earlier saw Quilty as a "distinguished playwright" smoking a Drome cigarette in the advertisement mentioned above that Quilty's plight at the mercy of Humbert becomes more grotesque than might otherwise have been the case, as Humbert tells him he is going to die in a moment and "He [keeps] taking [a] Drome cigarette apart and munching bits of it" (270). Here we have a knitting together of the first and last appearances of Quilty; and the contrast between Quilty as he was and as he now is under the influence of terror, becomes more striking.

As another piece of the puzzle, Lolita goes to a summer camp called "Q," which is linked with the fact that Quilty's friends call him "Cue" as a nickname. Also the whole matter of the play at Beardsley is filled with hidden references to Quilty. When he follows Humbert and Lolita West he keeps blatantly reappearing. It is the hood of his red car which projects in an obscene fashion from the neighbouring garage at Chestnut Court, which fact makes it obvious that Humbert was wrong in suspecting the young husband with the sheepish grin of being the one with whom Lolita had been unfaithful to him (195). In fact this is further substantiated in an indirect way by the proof Humbert later gathers that Quilty did indeed stay at the same motel on one occasion -- "But the most penetrating bodkin was the anagramtailed entry in the register of Chestnut Lodge 'Ted Hunter, Cane, N.H.'"

(229). (The registration is an anagram of "Enchanted Hunters" and thus is obviously the work of Lolita's new lover.)

Humbert has seen Lolita talking with a broadshouldered man outside "The Bustle: A Deceitful Seatful" (a man who is obviously Quilty), so it is odd that when Humbert catches sight of Quilty's tuxedo at a play jointly written by Quilty and Vivian Darkbloom, he is no further ahead in unraveling his pursuer's identity. But then Lolita cleverly confuses the issue, as she has done before, by insisting that Quilty is the female author and Darkbloom is the male. Quilty appears almost immediately again in a letter which is supposedly from Mona, part of the secret message of which is, "Chimène, comme le lac est beau car il faut qu'il t'y mène. Lucky beau! Qu'il t'y -- What a tongue twister!" (204) It is Quilty who is found playing tennis with Lolita while Humbert is diverted by a supposed phone call from Beardsley; it is also Quilty who watches Lolita gambol with the dog shortly before Humbert's attack (217); he is the playful uncle who takes Lolita away from the Elphinstone Hospital, and he keeps reappearing through hints after Lolita is lost. Hence Humbert is right when he says, "The gruesome hotel registration 'Harold Haze, Tombstone, Arizona,' . . . implied a familiarity with the girl's past that in nightmare fashion suggested for a moment that my quarry was an old friend of the family. . . ." (229). Quilty's first initial and nickname as well as his connection with the theatre are more or less given through license numbers such as "WS 1564," "SH 1616,"

"Q 32888," or "CU 88322" (229). The first two license plates contain Shakespeare's birth and death dates with various letters from his names. The last two plates obviously pertain to Quilty's own name and nickname.

More obscure is the reference tucked away in the Briceland newspaper through which Humbert searches for the picture taken at the Enchanted Hunters, in which he had accidentally been included while on his way upstairs to enjoy Lolita for the first time. Hidden among the miscellaneous items listed by Humbert as being in the paper (all of which have connotative connections with the story) is this small mention, "Wine, wine, wine, quipped the author of Dark Age who refused to be photographed, may suit a Persian bubble bird, but I say give me rain, rain, rain on the shingle roof for roses and inspiration every time" (239). Even after reading this, which indicates that Quilty had been interviewed by the Briceland Gazette the day that Humbert had stayed in Briceland with Lolita, even after this clue, Humbert fails to connect Quilty with the man he saw ogling Lolita on two different occasions. The first occasion had been on the first night over supper in the hotel dining room.

"Does not he look exactly, but exactly, like Quilty?" said Lo in a soft voice, her sharp brown elbow not pointing, but visibly burning to point, at the lone diner in the loud checks, in the far corner of the room.

"Like our fat Ramsdale dentist?"

Lo arrested the mouthful of water she had just taken, and put down her dancing glass.

"Course not," she said with a splutter of mirth. "I meant the writer fellow in the Dromes ad." (112)

The second occasion occurs the next morning when Humbert notes

a man watching Lolita with a look of lechery. Humbert even goes so far as to remark casually that "come to think of it, he resembled a little my Swiss uncle Gustave. . ." (128).

Yet he does not remember this when he is followed West two years later by a man who he notes resembles Gustave Trapp, this same relative.

Most artistically effective of all, however, is Humbert's brief and fatally forgotten conversation at the hotel that night with a man who could not be anyone but this very Quilty. Humbert is standing on the steps of the hotel thinking in the fresh air of what he will shortly do, and trying to justify it to himself.

Suddenly I was aware that in the darkness next to me there was somebody sitting in a chair on the pillared porch. I could not really see him but what gave him away was the rasp of a screwing off, then a discreet gurgle, then the final note of a placid screwing on. I was about to move away when his voice addressed me:

"Where the devil did you get her?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said: the weather is getting better."

"Seems so."

"Who's the lassie?"

"My daughter."

"You lie--she's not."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said: July was hot. Where's her mother?"

"Dead."

"I see. Sorry. By the way, why don't you two lunch with me tomorrow." (117)

This passage and Quilty's quip for the newspaper combine in an interesting way with facts revealed about him throughout the book. For one thing, Quilty shows here that he knows quite certainly that Humbert is lying when he says he is Lolita's father. This is explained by Lolita (as well as by the Harold Haze pseudonym) when she finally tells Humbert that

he had known her mother, had visited his uncle in Ramsdale and had kissed Lolita years before when she had been ten (248). The newspaper remark reminds one that Quilty was at the Enchanted Hunters in the rain, which in turn is connected with his play having been given the name of the hotel and with its being concerned with a nymphet. Also his remark to Humbert from out of the darkness that "Sleep is a rose, as the Persians say" (117) may be recalled by his reference to Persian bubble birds and roses in his remark for the newspaper.

It would be impossible to deal fully with this web of hidden interrelationships for they are extensive and lead into a welter of detail, but one scene in which Quilty and irony combine deserves attention because it is so completely typical of the way in which the important plot developments of this book form under the surface and show themselves obscurely long before emerging at all. One day after a rehearsal Lolita comes home very curious about the name of the hotel at which she first became Humbert's bed partner. Humbert is delighted at this unusual show of sentimentality, for she originally showed no signs of recognition when she first heard Beardsley was to put on a play with the same name as that fateful hotel. She is delighted at having the connection confirmed, and she rides off on her bicycle "with a yelp of amorous vernal laughter" (184) and with "one hand dreaming in her print-flowered lap" (184). Although Humbert sees this as a hopeful sign, future events show how quickly the beginning of the end was coming.

This scene and the whole system of hidden patterns are the outgrowth of Nabokov's most basic sense of what art is. In Speak Memory he says, "I discovered in nature the non-utilitarian delights that I sought in art. Both were a form of magic, both were a game of intricate enchantment and deception."⁹⁰ More specifically, these hidden plot interrelationships are explained by this further statement of Nabokov: "I confess I do not believe in time. I like to fold my magic carpet after use, in such a way as to superimpose one part of the pattern upon another. Let visitors trip."⁹¹

The elaborate artistry of a work of this nature cannot help making the work unrealistic: one can see the author's mind at work and the author's hand adjusting the effects. In fact there may be considerable confusion about Lolita because it is not always easy to determine exactly what effect Nabokov himself desired. A good deal of the time, the author appears to go out of his way in order to establish verisimilitude. Humbert explains why he can remember his diary so well (40), and he has made it clear that he does not remember Charlotte's avowal of love perfectly because he flushed it down the toilet fairly quickly (65). The accident which takes Charlotte's life is so fortuitous that there is a great deal of work put into making it appear true to life. By the time the causes are listed (and they include her hurry and emotional state, the dog which has been made to chase cars from the beginning of the book in preparation for this, the sun, the slipperiness of newly watered pavement, the steep

grade, the big car and stupid driver), by the time all these factors are marshalled to explain the accident it must appear inevitable; but Nabokov is not content even with this. When Humbert reads what is left of the letters which Charlotte was just about to mail, and which fortuitously are given to him, he discovers from her hysterical scrawl that there really had been a chance of reconciliation in time. Thus the possibility of murder which was mentioned before the accident, and the possibility of reunion which is raised after the accident, all appear to be an elaborate construction meant to make one believe that this book with this very opportune death is in fact a just mirror of reality and Humbert could possibly have obtained Lolita by two other methods.

The same attempt to achieve verisimilitude is continued with great care throughout. Facts about finances, the law and social customs are supplied at every turn: statutory definitions, medical statements, stories of past murders, sexual customs, psychological insights and the like are used quite extensively. Although Humbert can remember more than any real human being could be expected to remember, he is made to admit (in the interests of verisimilitude) that the names of the Beardsley girls are almost all approximations (173), he is unable to place a particular party in terms of time (175), he admits to incomplete memory from time to time (198, 203), and he can explain away what may be considered unusual feats of memory (195). Thus he forgets what letters he received at Wace but can remember Mona's to Lolita verbatim,

and he has a reason for being able to remember it so well. He cleverly mixes up two trips to Briceland with Rita--and Nabokov is careful to alert the reader to this human mistake (240). He carefully precedes his letter from the completely changed Lolita by a letter from a completely changed Farlow, the general psychology behind this being that since the reader will easily accept such vagaries on the part of a minor character in a novel, Nabokov, having had us accept this change (as Humbert himself reluctantly accepts it), can then proceed to present us with a now acceptable change in his most important character (242). Part of this attempt to convince the reader of the possibility of such a change in Lolita is a self-conscious monologue on stability of character which is given at this point; it is similar in its self-consciousness to Lolita's remark that if someone were to write up her life no one would believe it (249). Both the monologue and the remark appear to have been intended to assure the reader that he is not the only one to see developments as unusual, but that other people are able, nevertheless, to accept them as real. All of this is more or less the methodology of any novelist, and some of the devices mentioned above are rather lame, but there are some particularly good examples of artistic persuasion. Among these is Humbert's constant reference to "Our Glass Lake" until page seventy-seven, at which point the protagonist finally learns that the lake's name is "Hourglass." A similar fine touch is Humbert's ignorance of Fahrenheit degrees, which means that he must translate Lolita's temperature to Centigrade in order to tell

how ill she is (219).

With all of this, and the detailed descriptions of places and realistic touches given in descriptions of people (even to Humbert's having natural functions) it would appear that Nabokov was attempting to write what is generally termed a novel. As Ian Watt states in his article "Realism and the Novel Form," realism is the defining characteristic which differentiates the novel from prose fiction which is not a novel. In the novel time becomes very important, place becomes very particular and even names are chosen according to certain rules because they are a means of characterization and must be appropriate, while at the same time they must also sound like ordinary real-life names. Particulars are very important, language tends to be unadorned, and description tends to be realistic--all of which is part of creating an appearance of authenticity.⁹² Considering the fact that a fictitious foreword states that pseudonyms have replaced all the names in Lolita except for the name of "Dolores," Nabokov may be considered to have attempted to establish an atmosphere of verisimilitude, and to have taken great pains in doing so.

This leads one to consider the unrealistic fate which Humbert describes as having befallen his first wife, Valeria.

A man from Pasadena told me one day that Mrs. Maximovich nee Zborovshi had died in childbirth [as will Lolita] around 1945; the couple had somehow got over to California and had been used there, for an excellent salary, in a year-long experiment conducted by a distinguished American ethnologist. The experiment dealt with human and racial reactions to a diet of bananas and dates in a constant position on all fours. My informant, a doctor, swore he had seen with his own eyes

obese Valechka and her colonel, by then gray-haired and also quite corpulent, diligently crawling about the well-swept floors of a brightly lit set of rooms (fruit in one, water in another, mats in a third and so on)" (31)

This may remind one rather uncomfortably of the experiments carried on in Bend Sinister, one of which was to turn an expendable child loose in a yard and watch mental patients tear the child apart. In both experiments human beings become grotesque animals. One is inclined to say that this is not part of America but is rather the kind of experiment which Swift might attribute to the Academy of Lagado. For this reason Valeria's fate shatters verisimilitude, unless one claims Humbert is here lying.

Usually Humbert keeps before the reader the fact that this is all a book and that he has absolute control over what the book will say; thus the protagonist constantly steps out of his story in order to address juries, judges, kind readers and so on. He also teases the reader, as when he is unwilling to reveal Quilty's name in the context of being told it by Lolita.

"Do you really want to know who it was? Well it was--"

And softly, confidentially, arching her thin eyebrows and puckering her parched lips, she emitted a little mockingly, somewhat fastidiously, not untenderly, in a kind of muted whistle, the name that the astute reader has guessed long ago Quietly the fusion took place, and everything fell into order, into the pattern of branches that I have woven throughout this memoir with the express purpose of having the ripe fruit fall at the right moment; yes, with the express and perverse purpose of rendering--she was talking but I sat melting in my golden peace--of rendering that golden and monstrous peace through the satisfaction of logical recognition, which my most inimical reader should experience now. (248)

In something of a burlesque on detective stories the final answer to who the man was is not yet given. First all the

salient clues must be reviewed.

A similar playing with the reader occurs a little further on as Humbert asks Lolita to come away with him and then says as she refuses, "Then I pulled out my automatic-- I mean, this is the kind of a fool thing a reader might suppose I did. It never even occurred to me to do it" (255). With that, Humbert has made it clear to the reader that the reader is totally under the power of a man who could say anything and must still be believed for lack of any proof to the contrary.

The very patterns and fine touches given the book must, to some extent lessen the sense of reality connected with it; this is so not only because patterns tend to shut out life, as E.M. Forster says,⁹³ and not only because "The novelist who betrays too much interest in his own method can never [according to E.M. Forster] be more than interesting; [as] he has given up the creation of character and summoned us to help analyze his own mind. . . ." ⁹⁴ The problem is rather that the more perceptive the reader is the more he becomes aware of clever devices and ceases to give complete attention to the story through his admiration of the workings of the author's (as well as the narrator's) mind. When, for instance, Humbert describes the drills Lolita performed for drama class, one is struck by the fact that there is connotative force behind the list. Lolita is asked to go through the actions of hearing a moan in the dark, seeing a new step-parent for the first time, tasting something she hates, holding an apple and palpating the faces of a Greek youth, a

Cyrano, a Santa Claus, a baby, a laughing faun, a sleeping stranger and "your father" (210). Since all of these actions relate significantly to Lolita's life with its moans in the dark, its new step-father, its distasteful duties and the like, the author becomes rather embarrassingly visible for a novel.

This might yet be claimed to be the work of Humbert as narrator did he not maintain that the list was one made up by the school and which he still has among his papers (210). Moreover, the list is too predominantly connotative to be an accident--it is obviously meant for effect, as are a number of other heavily loaded lists which appear periodically throughout Lolita. Two examples of such lists are the enumeration of the names of the colours of cars driven by Humbert and Quilty (208), and the enumeration of the items seen in the Brice-land newspaper (239). As a further example, each of the three wanted men posted in the Elphinstone Post Office shares something in common with Humbert, while the missing girl posted there is the same age as Lolita. Humbert goes so far in pointing out the significance of this that he says, "If you want to make a movie out of my book, have one of these faces gently melt into my own, while I look" (203).

In addition, the whole system of imagery connected with butterflies (discussed at length in the next chapter), is not only unusual coming from a man who has not been characterized as knowing or caring about lepidoptery, but also shows a very specialized knowledge of the sort that a layman such as Humbert could not reasonably be expected to have.

Nabokov's highly developed artistry in Lolita may be further clarified by a comparison with King, Queen, Knave, his second novel. As the story is told from within three different characters, as well as through third person narration, it is easier to obtain a clear perspective of the author's extensive responsibility for special effects. This holds true for a number of Nabokov's other novels as well, particularly Pale Fire, which is predominantly ironic; but in King, Queen, Knave Nabokov has even gone so far as to write himself and his wife, Vera, into the novel as a brief "leitmotif."⁹⁵

Although Humbert is largely responsible for special effects in Lolita, there is a degree to which Nabokov introduces them without making use of the first-person narrator. In the final analysis, realism of technique or narration seems to have been consciously rejected in favor of what Stegner terms an intellectual game.⁹⁶ "His [Nabokov's] novels are composed like chess problems and 'meant for the delectation of the very expert solver'. . .",⁹⁷ Stegner says. This view is reinforced by Nabokov's own statements to the effect that he is at all times in control of his characters and subject matter, and that the reader must stay aloof since identification with a character or situation is only a minor form of pleasure, not at all equal to delectation of style.⁹⁸ Despite these statements, author Nabokov would appear to have put a great deal of effort into the transcription of sensations and the creation of characters. He has also struggled to base his plot on the reader's precon-

ception of how life unfolds. His re-creation of the world around him is very convincing once it is understood that pseudonyms are used and that Humbert sometimes distorts what he sees. Finally, the psychological reality of the story is maintained through presentation of a theme made pre-eminently believable--the very taste and feel of an obsession is here captured. This means that *Lolita* to some extent resists classification: subject matter and structure are basically realistic, but the technique of presentation tends to crack the mask of verisimilitude.

Finally, it has been stated that Nabokov parodies just about everything from the confessional mode of novel to cliché situations, mysteries, tour-guides, pulp romances and doubles. It has already been pointed out that much of the humour in Lolita comes through exploding cliché situations, as in such scenes as the Valeria divorce discussion, the seduction of Lolita and the melodramatic murder of Quilty. It has also been pointed out that there are aspects of the mystery genre used very cleverly throughout in the Quilty pattern, and that Nabokov uses other writers and their works --as in his Swiftian introduction, his parody of "Ash Wednesday" and in his use of "Annabel Lee." It should be noted, however, that in the way in which Nabokov uses burlesque, the parody is often more "a song sung beside" than a "comic parallel." Because Nabokov uses parody in both ways, it would be a mistake to interpret such things as his use of "Annabel Lee" or the double as constituting nothing but ridicule. On the other hand, he both ridicules and seriously imitates

something like the confessional mode of novel; it is obviously the most suitable form for a tale such as Humbert's, and yet Humbert abuses it from time to time, thus making it ridiculous.

As with all other matters discussed in this chapter, the use of parody eventually brings one back to the consideration of what a rococo style entails. It is the rococo technique which dominates Nabokov's style so that lyricism, humour and horror are mixed, a vast indiscriminate vocabulary is used, motifs and patterns proliferate, and rag-tail ends of other writers are borrowed for new effects. The result is that, as real as the primary story and theme may be made to appear, the style or technique of presentation is so remarkably robust that no reader is liable to forget for very long that this is a book--a very cleverly wrought piece of workmanship. Nor would Nabokov want him to forget this.

III

IMAGERY

Although imagery is intimately connected with style, language and patterns, it will here be dealt with separately because it is a large and involved subject in itself. Imagistic motifs constitute a great part of the texture of Lolita and act as a poetic reinforcement and vehicle for story and theme. There are several different patterns of imagery being integrated at once in this book, and they operate together to give the whole its peculiar effect.

First of all, as has already been mentioned, Humbert consistently describes himself as a monster, a cur or hound, a vampire, a beast, a ravenous bulk with tentacles, a rattlesnake, an incubus and a devil,⁹⁹ images which are meant to express some of the elemental or primitive bestiality which forms a part of Humbert's odd totality. Related to this are many references to more pleasing and less dangerous animals. Thus Humbert appears from time to time as the harmless but symbolically sexual hummingbird. This is connected with Humbert's name, which is twisted by Headmistress Pratt into "Humbird," "Hummer" and "Hummerson" (163), while even Humbert refers to himself as "Humbert the Hummer" the Sunday he first enjoys Lolita on the couch at home in Ramsdale. On this particular occasion Lolita is, appropriately, rather like a flower, dressed in a pink dress with a full skirt, and playing with a red apple "in the sun-dusted" air (55). Humbert possesses Lolita without possessing her, since he is

very close but never goes beyond being very close. Another scene in which his hummingbird quality is even more marked is the night scene on the terrace in which Humbert tells of his adventures up North.

All the while I was acutely aware of L.'s nearness and as I spoke I gestured in the merciful dark and took advantage of those invisible gestures of mine to touch her hand, her shoulder and a ballerina of wool and gauze which she played with and kept sticking into my lap; and finally, when I had completely enmeshed my glowing darling in this weave of ethereal caresses, I dared stroke her bare leg. . . . (44)

Humbert becomes a doe in the scene at the Enchanted Hunters (119), but usually his animal is the ape or spider, and occasionally the toad (224). When Humbert is associated with ugly animals, some of their ugliness or grotesqueness accrues to him, while, with the pleasing animals, his image is softened. The spider motif leads into the many images of Humbert as Hunter or Fisherman. Thus he says, "I am like one of those inflated pale spiders you see in old gardens. Sitting in the middle of a luminous web and giving little jerks to this or that strand. My web is spread all over the house as I listen from my chair where I sit like a wily wizard. Is Lo in her room, Gently I tug on the silk, She is not. . . . Let us have a strand of silk descend the stairs. . . . So my nymphet is not in the house at all! Gone! What I thought was a prismatic weave turns out to be but an old gray cobweb, the house is empty, is dead" (48).

The hunter motif permeates the book and appears in such succinct sentences as "Humbert the popular butcher" (100) and "Oh miserly Hamburg! Was he not a very Enchanted Hunter

as he deliberated with himself over his boxful of magic ammunition?" (101) Likewise, when Humbert calls for Lolita at camp he talks of how he abandoned his plan for the brief space between "two tiger heartbeats" but then "overtook his prey" (103) and proceeded to Briceland. At the hotel the hunting motif is a constant one, now linked to the name of the hotel, which name leads to the use of the terms "enchanted hunter" and "enchanted prey" (121). At this point the hunter and magic motifs come together, as the hunter and animal motifs did through the spider, and as animal and magic were combined in the arrival at the hotel with its row of cars parked like pigs at a trough and the magic path of access opening. The hunter theme is carried over into the surroundings also, as Humbert says "We sped through the striped and speckled forest" (103), and as he seeks out Beardsley as a "patterned surface which my stripes would blend with. . ." (159). All of this is clearly an imagistic extension of the central theme of the book. As has been stated already, Clare Quilty's play, The Enchanted Hunters, expressed the theme of Lolita: that reality and illusion merge in love. The quest for love becomes a hunt in an atmosphere of magic. This is overtly so in Quilty's play, while the same thing is done covertly, through images, in the novel as a whole.

Humbert's beasthood gradually gradates into the beasthood of Quilty, who tends to be described as animalistic, as goatish, and as a grotesque bird at one point. "There was a momentary flurry--he saw me, and throwing away his racket --mine!--scuttled up the slope. He waved his wrists and elbows

in would-be comical imitation of rudimentary wings, as he climbed, bowlegged, to the street, where his gray car awaited him" (215). Humbert calls him a hog (252) and a toad (265) and at the end Humbert again becomes a hunter, with Quilty as his prey this time.

Lolita has been associated with birds (particularly sparrows) a number of times throughout the story (189, 201, 223), as also with rabbits and other small soft animals, but the most striking of the animal images are Humbert as various ugly and grotesque beasts, and Humbert as associated with dogs --imagery which permeates the book; also interesting are the cows which appear constantly and among which Humbert finally ends up in a "Hegelian synthesis" (270).

Flowers play a minor part in the texture of the imagery, but they are used to good effect, as when Charlotte Haze says, "That was my Lo. . . and these are my lilies" and Humbert responds in rapture "Yes. . . yes. They are beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" (39) The flower show at Briceland at the time Humbert and Lolita come to the Enchanted Hunters Hotel, makes an effective background, and Humbert's gathering of wild-flowers on a mountain pass at sunrise in Elphinstone symbolizes his devotion to Lolita, while their funereal aspect is appropriate to the imminence of his loss of her. Similarly Nabokov is saying much when he has Humbert exclaim over his "magic vista," a "gap of weedy wasteland" (163) through which he can see young children going to school. Far more important, however, are the complexes of images connected with sight, blindness and watching, and the sets of

images which deal with disease, death, maiming, putrefaction and the like.

The motif of disease and death includes Humbert's illnesses, which start with spells of dizziness and tachycardia (for which Valeria's father was treating him) (25), and which include insomnia (32), nervous breakdowns (33), a feigned toothache and feigned facial neuralgia (60, 265), a daily headache (101), partial impotence with Charlotte (70), dyspepsia (120), constipation (128), a nervous tic (147), devastation through lust (160), an elaborate fit (217), his illness at Elphinstone (223), and his final coronary thrombosis, which is mentioned in the preface.

All of these ailments are related as physical correlates to Humbert's basic spiritual dilemma. The spells of dizziness, for example, may be termed a physical manifestation of the emotional state in which Humbert finds himself as a man caught off balance between his personal passion and the mores of a vigilant outer society (of which even a part of his conscience is a member). His insomnia may be a kind of image of the unsleeping and therefore unrelenting nature of his basic drive--his nympholepsy; his nervous breakdowns are the collapses of all order within him, and are thus related to the breakdown in the larger cosmic order, a breakdown constituted by Humbert's disobedience to the normal course of sexuality.

Humbert's headache becomes a physical correlative to his obsession, as both headache and obsession share the

quality of tense, throbbing and unrelenting pain. His partial impotence stands for the incompleteness of his part in normal sexuality, while dyspepsia is a comic variation on the theme of a lover dying from a burning heart. Ailments such as constipation show Humbert as disordered, as well as associating Humbert with the lower body functions. His nervous tic is the twitch of a puppet controlled by forces from without; it is an image similar to that of his being ravaged or devastated by lust, thus being like a country over-run by the enemy. His fit shows again the state of being beyond self-control, and it becomes an image of Humbert's fits of uncontrolled lust. His illness is the final running down of an intolerable order, and his heart disease is, of course, an image of diseased love--Humbert's demise is thus suitably to be laid at Lolita's door.

Annabel has died of typhoid, Humbert's mother and father are both dead, Lolita is seriously ill twice, once with bronchitis in Beardsley (181) and once with a virus at Elphinstone (219); as well she is envisaged as painted with the flaming colours of a "rabbit cold" at the moment that Humbert sees her as hopelessly sullen and tantalizingly close to the end of her nymphancy (187). Harold Haze has died off-stage and so will Charlie Holmes (264), but Charlotte and Quilty die in vivid colour and gory detail. Thus illness and death become the grim and ever present facts of life in Humbert's world. This presence of disease relates to the diseased relationship between Humbert and Lolita, while death

accentuates the question of time which is one of the major concerns of this novel, as of Humbert, since nymphancy and loss of same are so largely a question of time. As well, Valeria dies in child-birth as does Lolita and her child, and Mona's mother also has a still-born child--a series of deaths which seem to show the paralysis of the creative process in this destructive sphere where sex has ceased to be regenerative.

Jean Farlow dies of cancer (92) and is also a member of the barrage of neurotics who people this book, from Humbert himself, to Charlotte, to drunken Rita, the neurotic in the hospital at Elphinstone, Quilty the pervert, and doughfaced Gaston the pederast (165). This proliferation of perverts and neurotics sets the tenor of the world thus created, both contrasting and reinforcing the perversity of Humbert by its variations on the theme of the perverse.

Ginny McCoo has had polio and is now lame (40), and Lolita's other schoolmates indulge in perversions like incest (the Miranda twins) (126), as well as masturbation and lesbianism (Elizabeth Talbot) (125). They are also unhappily afflicted with ripe pimples, blackheads, foul smells and nail biting habits (50). Moreover, Humbert tends to see all young men who notice Lolita as pimply brutes (106) infected with pustules (170), all muscles and gonorrhea (146). These children are the hurt and perverted of the younger generation. In the end, Humbert even goes so far as to make Ginny McCoo an analogy to Lolita when he almost says, "I wonder sometimes what has become of the little McCoo girl, did she

ever get better?" but stops for fear Lolita should reply, "I wonder sometimes what has become of the little Haze girl. . . ." (255). The other children cited by Humbert embody evil and filth which is, in some cases, real; but which, in others, is basically a figment of Humbert's diseased imagination.

A number of people in Lolita are misshapen (25) or hunchbacked (204, 109), or look like "Boschian cripples" (215) for one reason or another. A man named Frank at the motel in Elphinstone is a mass of scars and is missing a finger (224), Lolita's husband is deaf (249) and his friend is missing an arm (229). Old Miss Opposite is a cripple (74), Leslie is a moron (77), old Mr. Beale has a heart condition (92), Miss Phalen has broken her leg, and a score of other characters are badly over-weight. All of this contributes to creating the effect of a world in which people are externally misshapen, ugly or hurt, just as Humbert is internally misshapen, just as what he does is ugly, and just as Lolita is hurt.

In addition, Humbert and Rita discover an amnesiac in bed with them one morning (237), Headmistress Pratt talks of herself as a gynecologist feeling a tumor (162), and Lolita is both stung by a poisonous insect (143) and wounded by a silver fruit knife (261). In these last four instances there is a kind of symbolic significance, just as the high number of deaths in birth is symbolic and just as the general air of rot (159), slime (160), pollution and convulsions (259) combines with the examples given above to create

the image of a foul, dirty, hurt and diseased world in which all order is running amok. The amnesiac raises the question of identity, and stands as one who has forgotten both the good and the bad in the past--a state of total release from the past for which Humbert cannot help having ambivalent feelings. The tumor over which Pratt is blindly groping is the malignant growth caused by Humbert's poison acting upon Lolita and destroying her soul. The poisonous insect is an image similar to that of the hummingbird, since the insect's act of stinging is a kind of Freudian sexual aggression. Similarly, the wounding by the fruit knife is a piercing of Lolita by a phallic object. It may also be noted that fruit itself has had sexual connotations since the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and thus a fruit knife is a doubly suggestive sexual object or image.

A more pleasant pattern of imagery is that connected with the sea, beaches and water. In his first description of nymphets, Humbert describes the age of nymphets as an enchanted island surrounded by a vast misty sea. In their own world nymphets play on mirrory beaches and rosy rocks (18). Similarly the world in which Humbert shops for presents for Lolita just before the seduction is characterized as having a touch of the sea in it.

Lifesize plastic figures of snubbed-nosed children with dun-coloured, greenish, brown-dotted, faunish faces floated around me. I realized I was the only shopper in that rather eerie place where I moved about fish-like, in a glaucous aquarium. I sensed strange thoughts form in the minds of the languid ladies that escorted me from counter to counter, from rock ledge to seaweed, and the belts and the bracelets I chose seemed to fall from siren hands into transparent water. (100)

A similar underwater effect is described by Humbert as surrounding the giving of these gifts on the night of the seduction, as Lolita walks up to the open suitcase (or treasure box) as though stalking it in a kind of slow-motion walk, lifting her feet high and bending her knees "with the lentor of one walking under water or in a flight dream" (111).

The sea imagery would appear to be Nabokov's means of associating Humbert's quest and the magic of Lolita with the sea as a frontier, primordial force, a world of beauty and mystery, the source of life, and the source of a vast destructive power. The sea is both a womb and a tomb just as Humbert's passion and Lolita are both life-giving and destructive. Also the sea (connected in the beginning with Annabel) becomes a link between Lolita and her precursor.

More sea or water imagery appears in a number of incidental places as well. There is mention made of crazed beauties lashing the grim rock which is Humbert (26), his knees, at one point, are like reflections of knees in rippling water (38), at another he "water tread[s]" (113) out of the dining room of the Enchanted Hunters Hotel. Elsewhere, the bathers who interrupted Annabel and Humbert are called ribald sea monsters, Quilty is referred to as a veritable Proteus of the highway (207), and Lolita, herself, is a little mermaid complete with a merman who is Humbert. A more important series of images points out the contrast between the soft sand, the cool blue water and the sunshine of the beach shared with Annabel and the beaches seen with Lo,

which were invariably lashed by muddy waves under a thick damp sky, shrouded by matter-of-fact boundless mist, infested with venomous beasties, or swept by hurricane winds. With these beaches, rotting trees, gritty and clammy sand, and a wet blanket of fog all added to kill the enchantment of the moment (153).

Finally, and in contrast, there is the confrontation between Humbert and Charlotte when Humbert contemplates murder on the motionless sands of Hourglass Lake. Charlotte is seen as a trustful clumsy seal who might easily be stood upon her head in the inky ooze were Humbert only to grab her foot as in "some dreadful silent ballet, [with] the male dancer holding the ballerina by her foot and streaking down through watery twilight" (81).

Dancers appear in this book three other times, once when Lolita is holding a ballerina doll and keeps shoving it into Humbert's lap, once in the image just quoted, which is ironically associated with phocine Charlotte, once with Quilty, who rises like Nijinski when hit by Humbert's second bullet (275), and once more with Lolita in a scene which is beautiful for its perfect balance. In the scene just referred to, Humbert is engaged in what is his idea of a beautiful art form, his very lethal game of chess, while Lolita is practising dance techniques downstairs in her bare feet. Thus contrasted with the cold symmetry and the calculating and destructive power of Humbert's game is Lolita's dance.

Sometimes from where we sat in my cold study I could hear Lo's bare feet practising dance techniques in the living

room downstairs; but Gaston's outgoing senses were comfortably dulled, and he remained unaware of those naked rhythms --and-one, and-two, and-one, and-two, weight transferred on a straight right leg, leg up out to the side, and-one, and-two, and only when she started jumping, opening her legs at the height of the jump, and flexing one leg, and extending the other, and flying, and landing on her toes--only then did my pale, pompous, morose opponent rub his head or cheek as if confusing those distant thuds with the awful stabs of my formidable Queen. (166)

Humbert's trip through America has been called his spiral down the levels of his inferno,¹⁰⁰ and it is interesting to note what reflections of himself and his situation he sees through images on this nightmare journey. Among these images of the inner man and the outer madness are obvious sexual symbols such as "the world's largest stalagmite," a granite obelisk (142), "relentless peaks," "timbered enormities" (143), "hundreds of gray hummingbirds in the dusk, probing the throats of dim flowers" (144), and "coloured hot springs, baby geysers, rainbows of bubbling mud--symbols of my passion" (145).

A second set of symbols would appear to apply to Lolita, who (as far as Humbert is concerned) shares frigidity with "Little Iceberg Lake" and who might be compared to the "patch of beautifully eroded clay" and the beautiful yucca blossoms "lousy with creeping white flies." Similarly the image of the skeletons of burned aspens (144) recalls the destruction of the little girl she once was, and the mummy of the child "Florentine Bea's Indian contemporary" (144) suggests the preservation of a soul-less body (and that of a little child), which is Lolita's state and Humbert's dilemma. The strictly commercial Indian dances parallel

Lolita's prostitution activities, as R.L. Stevenson's footprint on a volcano juxtaposes the make-believe world of youth with a charred symbol of passion. Likewise, the man having an epileptic fit calls to mind Humbert's uncontrollable convulsions of lust; the state penitentiary is a grim reminder of society and its punishment of crimes such as those of Humbert, while the antelopes in a wildlife refuge are a reminder of Lolita's unprotected state and of the kind of refuges open to such as she.

Further Humbert recalls "A zoo in Indiana where a large troop of monkeys lived on a concrete replica of Christopher Columbus' flagship" (145). With this description one is back to the animal imagery and one is faced with the unhappy relationship between animals mimicking people and people acting like animals, and this relationship is expressed in a setting which recalls voyages of search and exploration, and Humbert's own enchanted voyage of quest.

Other images of the situation in which Humbert and Lolita find themselves include the surroundings of "dust, wind, witherland" (144) through which they pass, in addition to their "twentieth Hell's Canyon" and all those ironic gateways "to something or other" (144). And always there are the mountains "[b]luish beauties never attainable" (143) while images of what life might be like appear from time to time--the sight of a Ramsdale family enjoying the view, a picture post card recalling Humbert's idyllic youth at the Hotel Miranda, and the entering of the fairytale worlds so

congenial to Lolita, of "Antebellum homes with iron-trellis balconies and hand-worked stairs, the kind down which movie ladies with sun-kissed shoulders run in rich Technicolour, holding up the fronts of their flounced skirts with both little hands in that special way, and the devoted Negress shaking her head on the upper landing" (143).

The mayflies, industrial smoke, sewer smell and spurious artifacts (143) which are mentioned in this list all help create the atmosphere of hopeless ugliness, and it is little wonder that Lolita asks "how long did [Humbert] think [they] were going to live in stuffy cabins, doing filthy things together and never behaving like ordinary people?" (145)

There are other scenes singled out by Humbert for the purpose of summing up different situations; one is Humbert's pictorial approximation of what it is to be his kind of Enchanted Hunter. If he had designed a mural with this theme,

There would have been a lake. There would have been an arbor in flame-flower. There would have been nature studies--a tiger pursuing a bird of paradise, a choking snake sheathing whole the flayed trunk of a shoat. There would have been a sultan, his face expressing great agony (belied, as it were, by his molding caress), helping a callypygean slave child to climb a column of onyx. There would have been those luminous globules of gonadal glow that travel up the opalescent sides of juke boxes. There would have been all kinds of camp activities. . . . There would have been poplars, apples, a suburban Sunday. There would have been a fire opal dissolving within a ripple-ringed pool, a last throb, a last dab of color, stinging red, smarting pink, a sigh, a wincing child. (124)

What has become of the wincing child, victim of such a hunter, or, to be more explicit, what has become of Lolita is

expressed through a shop window in the town of Wace. In the window there were two figures

that looked as if some blast had just worked havoc with them. One figure was stark naked, wigless and armless. Its comparatively small stature and smirking pose suggested that when clothed it had represented . . . a girl child of Lolita's size. . . . Next to it, stood a much taller veiled bride quite perfect and intacta except for the lack of one arm. On the floor, at the feet of these damsels. . . there lay a cluster of three slender arms, and a blond wig. Two of the arms happened to be twisted and seemed to suggest a clasping gesture of horror and supplication. (206)

Whatever Humbert is thinking of when he suggests to Lolita that this is "a rather good symbol," the shop window does show Lolita's devastated state at present, and does foreshadow Lolita as she will be later--a nearly intact bride, but still hopelessly damaged. At the same time, the arms in a clasping gesture of horror and supplication embody the plea for mercy which Lolita knows it is hopeless to make.

A third summing up is that which appears at the very beginning of the book as Humbert recounts his genealogy. In the brief compass of two grandfathers and four great-grandfathers, Nabokov gives Humbert a background connected, on the one hand, with wines, silks and jewels; and, on the other, with struggle and conquest through an alpinist grandfather. Further, his maternal great-grandfathers are said to have been Dorset parsons interested in Aeolian harps in one case, and in paleopedology in the other. Thus Humbert is ironically connected by birth with religion (with which he has a multi-faceted relationship) and with inspiration,

which is, after all, at the heart of his passion and is the reason for the existence of this book. Finally, as paleopedology is the study of the soils of past geological ages, the entire tragedy of Lolita is stated in prehistoric terms. Lolita is herself made out to be the soil from which Humbert's passion grows and the soil in which he plants; and reference to past geological ages sets this bond between the two in a context of great age and eternal recurrence. One might even venture to say that Lolita is the earth which is continually ground beneath the destroying rock and ice of glaciers. She is the ever-living but ever-changing female. Just as the earth continues but is never the same--so too nymphets are eternal but tantalizingly mutable. Destruction, as seen in trampling grapes to make wine, the earth's exerting of crushing pressure to form a jewel, and the devouring by silk-worms which is necessary before the fine silk can be spun--all these images which spring from the employments of Humbert's paternal forebearers, are objective correlatives to what happens in the story of Lolita. Lolita is heady wine, a jewel and as fine as silk; she is also trampled and crushed, and the green mulberry leaves of her youth are devoured.

There are a number of other images which associate Humbert's passion, sex and Lolita with sweetness: "the honey of a spasm" which is all milk, molasses and foaming champagne (59), and the drop of honey in the acorn cup (62), the apples, apple orchards and other fruits which appear throughout, the sleeping pill which is a precious tiny plum, as well as a

microscopic planetarium with its live stardust (101), Lolita's peppermint saliva (104), Lolita as all rose and honey (103), the pills (again) as made of summer skies, plums and figs and the grape blood of emperors (113), "the blueberry woods during the bluest of summers" (137), and all the references to gooey fudge concoctions.

Magic continually reappears through the fairy tale quality of certain scenes such as the buying of Lolita's gifts with "phantom little Lolitas dancing, falling, daisy-ing all over the counter" (100). And again there is magic in presenting them: "Was there something wrong, I wondered, with those great gray eyes of hers, or were we both plunged in the same enchanted mist?" Similarly, the night of the seduction Lolita's clothes in the "strange pale-striped fastness" lie "in various attitudes of enchantment on pieces of furniture that [seem] vaguely afloat" (120), and later a "breeze from wonderland" makes Humbert's thoughts seem couched in italics as though the surface reflecting them were wrinkled by the breeze (121). Elsewhere he talks of himself as an enchanted traveller whose paradise has skies the colour of hell-flames (152). He also mentions magic vistas (163), a magic cave with its Spring ceremonial rites (192) and a spell having been cast so that Humbert is followed West by "a zone of evil mirth and magic," an "enchanted interspace . . . mirage-like, the viatic counterpart of a magic carpet . . ." (200). Later the mountain haze at Wace seems "to swarm with panting, scrambling, laughing, panting Lolitas who

[dissolve] in their haze" (204). Her drama practice is spoken of as make-believe and she as a performer in a mystic rite (210). Likewise there is a touch of magic in the moonlight meeting with Nurse Mary, who is a kind of "belle dame sans merci" (227), and the journey to Grimm road is much like something out of a fairy tale.

I started to drive to Grimm Road, twelve miles north of the town. By that time night had eliminated most of the landscape and as I followed the narrow winding highway, a series of short posts, ghostly white, with reflectors, borrowed my own lights to indicate this or that curve. I could make out a dark valley on one side of the road and wooded slopes on the other, and in front of me, like derelict snowflakes, moths drifted out of the blackness into my probing aura. At the twelfth mile, as foretold, a curiously hooded bridge sheathed me for a moment and, beyond it, a white-washed rock loomed on the right, and a few car lengths further, on the same side, I turned off the highway up gravelly Grimm Road. For a couple of minutes all was dank, dark, dense forest. Then, Pavor Manor, a wooden house with a turret, arose in a circular clearing. Its windows glowed yellow and red. . . . (266)

Further, the drive back to town is described in this way:

There was still that stream of pale moths siphoned out of the night by my headlights. Dark barns still propped themselves up here and there by the roadside. . . . While searching for night lodgings, I passed a drive-in. In a selenian glow, truly mystical in its contrast with the moonless and massive night, on a gigantic screen slanting away among dark drowsy fields, a thin phantom raised a gun, both he and his arm reduced to tremulous dishwater by the oblique angle of that receding world,--and the next moment a row of trees shut off the gesticulation. (267)

By far the most pervasive set of images involves sight and blindness and a certain amount of spying. To begin with, there is the motif of sunglasses, which appears in four major places in addition to a number of less important ones. The pattern of sunglasses begins with Annabel the afternoon on the beach when she and Humbert are making love "with somebody's lost pair of sunglasses for only witness" (15), at which

point they are discovered by bathers. Next, Humbert finds Lolita for the first time "peering at him over dark glasses" (38), and this detail is mentioned again in the same passage as Humbert recalls "her eyes blinking over those stern dark spectacles--the little Herr Doktor who was to cure me of all my aches. . ." (39). Next, sunglasses are part of Humbert's daydream for getting Lolita alone (51), and they are his excuse for escaping Charlotte for a few moments when he first hears that Lolita is to be sent to boarding school (78). They are also the cause of his stopping at a filling station on the second trip West, at which time he sees Lolita talking to Quilty with "voluble familiarity" (199). Thus, with sunglasses, Nabokov establishes an imagistic link between Annabel and Lolita, and begins a pattern of sight imagery which connects sex and vision (as did the seventeenth century).

One of the constant themes of Humbert's story is the avidity with which he watches Lolita, first for the voyeuristic pleasure of it, and then in fear of losing her. Likewise, his blindness in failing to understand so much of what goes on before him--this mental blindness--is paralleled by Lolita's constantly mentioned myopia. As though the one depended on the other, Humbert does not clearly "see" the situation until he talks to bespectacled Dolly Schiller.

In addition to the constant watching which Humbert indulges in, there is also the observing presence of Charlotte lying like a shadow over the early part of the book. Ironically, however, although she is always there and capable of

seeing, she seldom notices anything between her daughter and her lodger, and when she does notice something it is usually only Lolita's part in it, and thus she has sight but fails to see. Jean Farlow is another character noted for the act of seeing; she has spied on two children making love at the lake, and Leslie taking a swim in the nude, as well as Humbert and Charlotte swimming on the day that Humbert thought of drowning Charlotte. She is always spying on nature and whatever happens to get in the way of her view of nature.

Quilty watches Lolita with carnal deliberation twice at the Enchanted Hunters. In contrast, Gaston Godin fails to notice Lolita on his visits to the Humbert home and so thinks Humbert has as many daughters as he has caught chance glimpses of Lolita in different attire (167). Quilty also follows and hence watches Humbert and Lolita on the second trip West, and later Humbert watches Quilty watching Lolita who is aware that her gamboling is being observed and who "enjoy[s] the lechery of his look" (217).

One of Humbert's first pleasant contacts with Lolita involved removing a speck from her eye (42), and Humbert remembers her eyes with a possessive tenderness which is horrified that Miss Pratt should think they are blue (161). Lolita's eyes are described as her "great gray eyes," her heartless eyes (186), "those unforgettable eyes where cold anger and hot tears struggled" (188), and they are later muddy, moony eyes (196). When Humbert has a fit it is Lolita's eyes which he notices and which he sees as "more calculating than

frightened" (217). These same eyes are washed out when he sees her as a married woman (248), but he declares that even if her eyes were to fade to myopic fish (253) he would still go mad with tenderness at the sight of her.

For their part, Humbert's eyes are usually described as sad (203), dog-eyed (82), as the eyes of a goat (172), or as aging ape eyes (38). He also speaks of the thousand eyes in his "eyed blood" (41) and of the sunny noon being all eyes (262), and so the proliferation of eyes becomes almost an impressionistic horror. Eyes are everywhere, about to see secret things. Humbert barely misses disclosure on a mountain pass when, caressing a sprawling, sobbing Lolita he suddenly looks up to see "the unblinking eyes of two strange and beautiful children. . ." (154). At the Enchanted Hunters Hotel and in Beardsley he is constantly making beds to hide from the eyes of chamber maids or servants the activities which had gone on the night before. In fact he feels as though he is living in a glass house (165), and he is further cursed by having a watchful neighbour. But he is singularly lucky in escaping detection in the end, just as at the very beginning "blessed intuition broke our embrace--a split second before a highway patrol car drew up alongside" (105).

Humbert is constantly losing sight of Lolita, as at the roller rink (147), the tennis court (149) and in Beardsley (188) and Wace. Even when she is in sight, Humbert finds himself in the frustrating position of seeing Lolita riding off separated from him by other men (147) or going up in a chair

lift away from him to a place where Humbert thinks other men are waiting just for her. When he is finally to lose her in Elphinstone, he drives to the hospital "half blinded by a royal sunset" (219). When he leaves her for the last time, tears proliferate. His reconstruction of how he must have appeared to her stresses the two eyes and "foot of engorged brawn" (258) which surrealistically sums up his lust and constant watching.

The examples of this kind of image are almost interminable--from his open voyeurism before meeting Lolita (22), to his descriptions of Lolita slitting her eyes (175), to his statements of the sort that nature is stunned by the sights it sees (202), to his experience as a very conspicuous pedestrian back in Ramsdale (262), and to the ignoring, watching and noticing which is a part of the experience of killing Quilty.

Finally, there is another pattern of images which permeates Lolita and which involves butterflies and lepidoptery. In a very interesting article, Diana Butler has set forth a theory on the part lepidoptery plays in this book, the first premise of which theory is that Nabokov's own interest in butterflies is more than scientific, and that it has become "poetic, emotional, and obsessive."¹⁰¹ Evidence of the relevancy of this poetic obsession to Lolita lies in the fact that one of the meanings of the word "nymph" is the young of an insect, or "pupa." As Miss Butler goes on to say, "The butterfly has often been used in literature as

the symbol of the unattainable, combining matter and an appearance of spirituality, but eluding the grasp of man."¹⁰² This does not mean that Nabokov uses the butterfly as a symbol or abstraction: "to Nabokov, butterflies are a physical reality, objects to which he has attached his own deepest emotions. They may easily possess more sensuous reality for him than twelve-year-old girls."¹⁰³ This is true, according to Nabokov, who has said that he does not know little girls very well and that he had to create Lolita, in the sense of making something out of nothing.¹⁰⁴ The only amendment one might make to this statement is that Lolita has, no doubt, been made out of Nabokov's love for butterflies rather than out of nothing.

As evidence for this claim is the fact that Nabokov tends to describe Lolita as physically resembling a particular species of butterfly. He tends to stress the golden-brown or apricot colour of Lolita's body, the minute hairs on her legs, and the whitish background of the untanned parts of her body and the clothes she wears. These characteristics match the characteristics of the "*Lycaeides sublivens* Nabokov," a type of butterfly captured and named by Nabokov, which has golden-brown wings with whitish undersides and soft downy hairs. The word "pubescence" so often applied to Lolita, means literally the soft downy hairs on an insect. Also Lolita's moles, freckles and bruises recall the dark spots found on the underwings of Nabokov's special variety of butterfly.

Lolita's eyes are myopic as are those of the butterfly;

her liking for fruit is one shared by butterflies; and her odour, "a torrid odour that at once set [Humbert's] manhood astir" (41), is a natural attraction shared with butterflies which secrete sweetish musky perfumes. Even Lolita's "slender waist, gentle bones, and tapering back, agree with a butterfly's physique."¹⁰⁵ And Humbert's science of nympholepsy shares a number of things with the science of lepidoptery. For example, Humbert's diary usually gives the description of locale, terrain and weather which a lepidopterist's field book gives. His precise giving of Lolita's measurements when buying her clothes is comparable to the lists of precise measurements found in scientific papers on butterflies, and his distinctions between nymphets and non-nymphets "echo the distinctions between moths and butterflies, which together comprise the order Lepidoptera. Although moths are big-bodied and butterflies are slender-bodied, some moths are more beautiful than butterflies, and only an expert can be sure of telling them apart."¹⁰⁶ Humbert states that beauty is not necessarily the sign of the nymphet (19), and fat women are definitely anathema to him.

In addition, Humbert "likens himself to the traditional predators upon butterflies. He is a toad, an ape or monkey, a spider, and a hummingbird."¹⁰⁷ Weather conditions are important in capturing butterflies, and rain interferes often with Humbert's plans to get closer to Lolita at the beginning of the novel. Also Humbert's list of Lolita's classmates places Lolita twenty-second; the Encyclopaedia Britannica's list of

the orders of insects, and the three other lists consulted by Miss Butler, all place lepidoptera twenty-second. Finally, as Lolita flattens herself against the door of the shack on Killer Road in order to let Humbert pass, Humbert sees her as being crucified for a moment (246), and Miss Butler feels that this is the final pinning of the butterfly to the board. The descriptions of Lolita which follow this, are descriptions of a woman who is by no means any longer a nymphet--the butterfly in Lolita is dead.

The images quoted throughout this chapter have all added to the texture of the work a little of the bestial and the beautiful. There has been a thread of disease running throughout, and there has been magic and sweetness to meet and offset the other. The images of sight have created a weird world of eyes watching; and the butterfly images illuminate a good deal of the author's feeling for his subject and his involvement in it. In his autobiographical work, Speak Memory, Nabokov says:

. . . I can name a blooming garden in Paris as the place where I noticed in 1938 or 1939, a quiet girl of ten or so, with a dead pan white face. . . who had deftly tied a live butterfly to a thread and was promenading the pretty weakly fluttering, slightly crippled insect on that elfish leash. . . . If I diverted our child's attention from that would be Titania, it was not because I pitied her Red Admirable. . . but because there was some vaguely repulsive symbolism about her sullen sport.¹⁰⁸

It is similarly true that there is something repulsive about what Humbert has done, and it is basically not a very different kind of sport in which he has been engaging. Where the difference lies is in the fact that in Lolita the butterfly has become a little girl.

CONCLUSION

Of Nabokov's works, Lolita is both the novel for which he professes the greatest affection and the novel which has been most widely read by the public at large.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, one of the more controversial books of recent years, there has been very little said about it which has not been tinged with emotionalism and concerned primarily with whether or not the book is pornographic.

The novel is noteworthy for several reasons. In the first place it is one of the better sustained and more convincing evocations of an obsession in modern literature. And, it is also one of the best evocations of a beloved woman written in recent times. In both respects it must remind one of Saul Bellow's Herzog, which is concerned with an obsession and a remarkable woman, and which is also the revelation of the mind of a very learned and aware man.

Humbert is not a mere pervert, not another Quilty, but rather a man with a desire for unattainable beauty, and one who suffers horribly from the very fact that it is unattainable. For her part, Lolita is the amoral desirable female who leads men to destruction; but her characterization does not end there, for she is also a victim, a young girl whose youth has been taken from her. As Humbert recalls:

There was the day when having withdrawn the functional promise I had made her on the eve. . . I happened to glimpse from the bathroom, through a chance combination of mirror aslant and

door ajar, a look on her face. . . that look I cannot exactly describe. . . an expression of helplessness so perfect that it seemed to grade into one of rather comfortable inanity just because this was the very limit of injustice and frustration And when you bear in mind that these were the raised eye-brows and parted lips of a child, you may better appreciate what depths of calculated carnality, what reflected despair, restrained me from falling at her dear feet and dissolving in human tears, and sacrificing my jealousy to whatever pleasure Lolita might hope to derive from mixing with dirty and dangerous children in an outside world that was real to her. (259)

The germ of their conflict can be seen in this extract:

neither Lolita nor Humbert can be happy; neither can Humbert ever really have Lolita or bring himself to let her go; and she can never be the embodiment of his lost first love. Add to this the fact that even the solace Lolita grants him must inevitably be lost, and the result is climactic.

The second notable characteristic of Lolita is Nabokov's rococo style which makes every word count, enjoys a wealth of detail and a mixture of tones, parodies extensively and revels in fantastic vocabulary and verbal virtuosity. Part of this style is the remarkable system of imagery from which the texture of the book is created. This imagery is closely connected also with a device peculiar to Nabokov: it is not symbolism, for Nabokov prefers images and analogies which are not as restrictive as he believes symbols tend to be. The device used is, perhaps, best explained by an example: the Briceland newspaper in which Humbert searches for a picture which had accidentally included him. Among the things seen are these items:

Brute Force and Possessed were coming on Sunday, the 24th to both theatres. Mr. Purdom, independent tobacco auctioneer, said that ever since 1925 he had been an Omen Faustum smoker.

Husky Hank and his petite bride were to be the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Reginald G. Gore, 58 Inchkeith Ave. The size of certain parasites is one sixth of the host. Dunkerque was fortified in the tenth century. Misses' socks, 39 c. Saddle Oxfords 3.98. Wine, wine, wine, quipped the author of Dark Age who refused to be photographed, may suit a Persian bubble bird, but I say give me rain, rain, rain on the shingle roof for roses and inspiration every time. Dimples are caused by the adherence of the skin to the deeper tissues. (239)

This excerpt shows the way in which masses of information are grouped and related to the plight of the protagonist although often in puzzling and obscure ways. Brute force and possession, omens and Dr. Faustus, a big hulking man, his little bride and gore, parasites, fortification, young girls' shoes, Quilty, and dimples are all thrown into close conjunction. This sort of amassing is done occasionally for an effect which it is possible to define, as in contrasting normal life with the life of Humbert and Lolita (195) or in developing the theme of desolation (193). At other times, these lists appear to be but the exuberance of Nabokov's pleasure in puzzles, as in the extensive list of the aliases of Quilty (228/9).

Lolita maintains a precarious balance between a compelling story and serious theme, on the one hand, and a self-conscious, highly polished vehicle for this story and theme. The tension between verisimilitude and artfulness which results from this balance, leads to ambiguity in defining the mode of realism employed by Nabokov. Nabokov is meticulous in creating credibility in his subject matter and the structure in which it is encased (the feel that this is the way life unfolds), and yet his extreme virtuosity, and his delight in technique create a work in which the reader is not only invited but almost commanded to remain aloof and admire

the result as a work of art.

Finally, Lolita is intensely lyrical, and for this quality alone might be termed worthy of attention since it is somewhat out of the mainstream of Nabokov's other novels, albeit very much like his autobiography. This lyricism, the imagery, patterns and rococo trimmings, which are so much a part of the book, patently repudiate the undue affinity Lolita has been accused of having with the titillating narrowness of pornography and pornography's single-minded concentration on the strictly physical. In this novel, Nabokov has given one a good example of modern "erotic realism," which, as the Kronhausens have delineated it, limits itself strictly to the description of the realistic aspects of life: "It does not aim at exciting sexual passion, nor does it act as a psychological aphrodisiac, except by coincidence of context. Its only goal is to depict life as it is, including man's basic biological needs."¹¹⁰ It is no doubt as erotic realism that Lolita shocked and offended many, but it is hardly the erotic aspect of Nabokov's own peculiar kind of realism which most interested him in the course of writing. This is borne out by noting what Nabokov, in his afterword, to the novel, calls the "nerves of the novel" (287).

These "nerves" include the picture of Taxovich, and that of the Kasbeam barber, the Ramsdale class list, the pictures in Gaston Godin's garret, the hospital at Elphinstone, the sounds of the valley town (280), and Charlotte's saying "waterproof" (83) as well as Lolita's opening her

gifts, and playing tennis, and Lolita as "pale, pregnant, beloved, irretrievable Dolly Schiller. . ." (287). These vignettes, which so pleased Nabokov, are, in his own words, "the secret points, the subliminal coordinates by means of which the book is plotted. . ." (287). These scenes have very little to do with the overt sexual content of the book.

Nabokov is always doing what his character Sebastian Knight is said to have done: "With something akin to fanatical hate Sebastian Knight was ever hunting out the things which had once been fresh and bright but which were now worn to a thread, dead things among living ones: dead things shamming life, painted and repainted, continuing to be accepted by lazy minds serenely unaware of the fraud."¹¹¹ Like Sebastian, Nabokov uses parody "as a kind of spring-board for leaping into the highest region of serious emotion,"¹¹² and Lolita lies in this region of serious emotion.

This contrast between, and linking of, parody and serious emotion is, in the last analysis, analogous to the contrast and link between the artful form and the realistic story. It is also related to the criticism of Lolita which seemed unable to appreciate both aspects of this dichotomous work, and which, itself, bifurcated into strong dislike or exuberant praise. This thesis has attempted to demonstrate that there is not only no need for such extreme critical biases, but that explication of the work itself, proves them to be weakly based and misleading.

NOTES

Introduction

- 1 Hatch, "Books in Brief," 97.
- 2 Hicks, "American Fiction in 1958," 18.
- 3 Moynahan, "Speaking of Books: Vladimir Nabokov," 14.
- 4 Prescott, "Books of the Times," 17.
- 5 Amis, "She Was a Child and I Was a Child," 635.
- 6 Woodruff, "Lolita," 9.
- 7 Pitman, "'Lolita' in London," 34.
- 8 Hansom, quoted in "The Lolita Case," 93.
- 9 "Lolita's Creator--Author Nabokov, a 'Cosmic Joker,'" 51.
- 10 Girodias, "Lolita, Nabokov, and I," 45.
- 11 Nabokov, quoted in "Lolita's Creator--Author Nabokov a 'Cosmic Joker,'" 51.
- 12 Hayman, "After 'Lolita'--A Conversation With Vladimir Nabokov--With Digressions," 444.
- 13 "Lolita and the Critics," 3.
- 14 Pryce-Jones, "The Fabulist's Worlds: Vladimir Nabokov," 75.
- 15 Ibid.

Chapter I:

- 16 Crane, "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones," 620.
- 17 Nabokov, Lolita (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Crest Books, 1955), 180. All future references to Lolita are to this edition.
- 18 Baro, "Wry Comedy of One Man's Sad Obsession," 5.
- 19 "Playboy Interview: Vladimir Nabokov," 241.
- 20 de Rougemont, "Lolita, or Scandal," and Trilling, "The Last Lover--Vladimir Nabokov's 'Lolita.'"
 - 21 de Rougemont, "Lolita, or Scandal," 41.
 - 22 Trilling, "The Last Lover--Vladimir Nabokov's 'Lolita,'" 18.
 - 23 Nabokov, The Waltz Invention, 68.
 - 24 Nabokov, The Gift, 115.
 - 25 Janeway, "The Tragedy of Man Driven by Desire," 5.
 - 26 Hollander, "The Perilous Magic of Nymphets," 480.
 - 27 Nabokov, "Ode to a Model," 35.
 - 28 Appel, "Lolita: The Springboard of Parody," 111.
 - 29 Trilling, "The Last Lover," 14.
 - 30 Dupee, "The Coming of Nabokov," 128.

- 31 Amis, "She Was a Child and I Was a Child," 636.
- 32 Mitchell, "Mythic Seriousness in Lolita," 341.
- 33 Ibid., 334.
- 34 Ibid., 329.
- 35 Ibid., 332.
- 36 Hale, "Hemingway and the Courage to Be," 622.
- 37 Trilling, "The Last Lover," 13.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Dupee, "The Coming of Nabokov," 128.
- 40 Janeway, "The Tragedy of Man Driven by Desire," 25.
- 41 Dupee, "The Coming of Nabokov," 128.
- 42 Saroyan, "Lolita," 23.
- 43 Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled Lolita," 238.
- 44 Coleman, "Nabokov," 619.
- 45 "Playboy Interview: Vladimir Nabokov," 238.
- 46 Stegner, Escape into Aesthetics: The Art of Vladimir Nabokov, 20-21.
- 47 Amis, "She Was a Child and I Was a Child," 636.

- 48 "Playboy Interview: Vladimir Nabokov," 240.
- 49 Nabokov, Invitation to a Beheading, 137.
- 50 Nabokov, Bend Sinister, 26.
- 51 Balakian, "The Prophetic Vogue of the Anti-heroine,"
141.
- 52 de Rougemont, "Lolita, or Scandal," 53.
- 53 Quoted by Pryce-Jones, "The Fabulist's Worlds," 69.
- 54 Grosshans, "Vladimir Nabokov and the Dream of Old
Russia," 402.
- 55 "Playboy Interview: Vladimir Nabokov," 239.
- 56 Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law, 165.
- 57 Ibid., 195-211.
- 58 Ibid., 42.
- 59 Mead, quoted in Widmer, Literary Censorship, 149.
- 60 Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law, 249.
- 61 Ibid., 269.
- 62 Ibid., 248.
- 63 Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled Lolita," 74.
- 64 Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law, 237.
- 65 Walbridge, Library Journal, LXXXIII, 2183.

- 66 Lawrence, Sex. Literature and Censorship, 74.
- 67 Marceuse, Obscene, 22.
- 68 Holmes, quoted in Widmer, Literary Censorship, 19.
- 69 Widmer, Literary Censorship, 19.
- 70 Fiedler, No! in Thunder, 290.

Chapter II:

- 71 Schorer, "Technique as Discovery," 9.
- 72 Y Gasset, "The Decline of the Novel," 69.
- 73 Dupee, "Lolita in America," 35.
- 74 "Ithaca and 'Lolita,'" 54.
- 75 Janeway, "The Tragedy of Man Driven by Desire," 5.
- 76 Dupee, "The Coming of Nabokov," 125.
- 77 Hayman, "After 'Lolita,'" 446.
- 78 Nabokov, quoted in Smith, "Vladimir Nabokov on His Life and Work," 856.
- 79 Green, "American Rococo: Salinger and Nabokov," 212.
- 80 Amis, "She Was a Child and I Was a Child," 635.
- 81 Pryce-Jones, "The Fabulist's Worlds," 73.
- 82 Appel, "Lolita--The Springboard of Parody," 121.

- 83 Nabokov, "On a Book Entitled Lolita," 76.
- 84 Hicks, "A Man of Many Words," 31.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Nabokov, Bend Sinister, 29.
- 87 Strainchamps, "Nabokov's Handling of English Syntax," 29.
- 88 Rovit, "Books Abroad," 160.
- 89 Smith, "Vladimir Nabokov on His Life and Work," 857.
- 90 Nabokov, Speak Memory, 125.
- 91 Ibid., 122.
- 92 Watt, "Realism and the Novel Form," 60-79.
- 93 Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 234.
- 94 Ibid., 122.
- 95 Nabokov, King, Queen, Knave, 232, 254.
- 96 Stegner, Escape into Aesthetics, 21.
- 97 Ibid., 20.
- 98 Hayman, "After 'Lolita,'" 449.

Chapter III:

- 99 See chapter two.
- 100 Janeway, 5.

- 101 Butler, "Lolita Lepidoptera," 58.
- 102 Ibid., 60.
- 103 Ibid., 61.
- 104 Smith, "Vladimir Nabokov on His Life and Work,"
857.
- 105 Butler, "Lolita Lepidoptera," 78.
- 106 Ibid., 67.
- 107 Ibid., 68.
- 108 Nabokov, Speak Memory, 305.

Conclusion

- 109 Coleman, "Nabokov," 619.
- 110 Kronhausen, Pornography and the Law, 27.
- 111 Nabokov, The Real Life of Sebastian Knight, 80.
- 112 Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Nabokov, Vladimir. King, Queen, Knave. Translated by Dimitri Nabokov. New York: McGraw Hill, 1968.
- . The Defence. Translated by Michael Scammell. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964.
- . The Eye. Translated by Dimitri Nabokov. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.
- . Laughter in the Dark. New York: New Directions, 1960.
- . Despair. New York: Putnam, 1966.
- . The Gift. Translated by Michael Scammell. New York: Popular Library, 1963.
- . Invitation to a Beheading. Translated by Dimitri Nabokov. New York: Putnam, 1959.
- . The Waltz Invention. Translated by Dimitri Nabokov. New York: Phaedra, 1966.
- . The Real Life of Sebastian Knight. London: Editions Poetry, 1945.
- . Bend Sinister. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1947.
- . Lolita. Greenwich Connecticut: Fawcett Crest Books, 1955.
- . Pnin. New York: Atheneum, 1965.
- . Nabokov's Dozen. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958.
- . Poems. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961.
- . Speak, Memory. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967.
- . Pale Fire. New York: Putnam, 1962.
- . Nabokov's Quartet. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967.

SECONDARY MATERIAL

- Allen, Walter. "Simply Lolita," New Statesman, LVIII (November 1959), 631-632.
- Alvarez, L. "London Letter--Exile's Return," Partisan Review, XXVI (Spring 1959), 284-289.
- Amis, Kingsley. "She Was a Child and I Was a Child," The Spectator, No. 6854 (November 6, 1959), 635-636.
- Axthelm, Peter. The Modern Confessional Novel. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Baker, George. "Lolita: Literature or Pornography?" Saturday Review, XL (June 22, 1957), 18.
- Balakian, Nona. "The Prophetic Vogue of the Anti-heroine," Southwest Review, XLVII (Spring 1962), 134-141.
- "Ban on 'Lolita' Lifted," London Times, September 21, 1959, 9.
- Baro, Gene. "Wry Comedy of One Man's Sad Obsession," NY Herald Tribune Book Review, August 17, 1958, 5.
- Beaver, Harold. "A Figure in the Carpet: Irony and the American Novel," Essays and Studies, XV (1962), 113-114.
- Bloom, Edward. The Order of Fiction. New York: Odyssey Press, 1964.
- Booth, Wayne. "True Novels Must be Realistic," in The Rhetoric of Fiction. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Brenner, Conrad. "Nabokov: The Art of the Perverse," New Republic, CXXXVIII (June 23, 1958), 18-21.
- Brick, Allan. "The Madman in His Cell: Joyce, Beckett, Nabokov and the Stereotypes," Massachusetts Review, I (Fall 1959), 52-55.
- Butler, Diana. "Lolita Lepidoptera," New World Writing, No. 16 (1960), 58-84.
- Coleman, John. "Nabokov," The Spectator, No. 6854 (November 6, 1959), 619.
- College English, XXI (October 1959), 69.
- Craig, Alec. The Banned Books of England. London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1962.

Crane, R.S. "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of Tom Jones," in Critics and Criticism Ancient and Modern. Edited by R.S. Crane. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952.

Dupee, F.W. "The Coming of Nabokov," in his "The King of the Cats" and Other Remarks on Writers and Writing. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1965.

-----, "Lolita in America," Encounter, XII (February 1959), 30-35.

"Exclusive on 'Nymphet'?" Publisher's Weekly, CLXXVIII (August 8, 1960), 28.

Fiedler, Leslie A. No! In Thunder. Beacon Press, 1960.

Flint, R.W. "Lolita: The Moral Issues," New Republic, CXXXIX (November 3, 1958), 26-29.

Forster, E.M. Aspects of the Novel. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927.

Friedman, Norman. "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," PMLA, LXX (1955), 1160-1184.

Frye, Northrop. "Fictional Modes," in Approaches to the Novel. Edited by Robert Scholes. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961.

Gardiner, Harold C. The Catholic Viewpoint on Censorship. Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1961.

Girodias, Maurice. "Lolita, Nabokov, and I," Evergreen Review, IX (September 1965), 44-47, 89-91.

Green, Martin. "American Rococo: Salinger and Nabokov," in his Re-Appraisals: Some Commonsense Readings in American Literature. New York: W.W. Norton, 1965.

Grosshans, Henry. "Vladimir Nabokov and the Dream of Old Russia," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, VII (Winter 1966), 401-409.

Hale, Nancy. "Hemingway and the Courage to Be," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXVIII (Autumn 1962), 621-623.

Hatch, Robert. The Nation, CLXXXVII (August 30, 1958), 97.

Hayman, John G. "After 'Lolita'--A Conversation With Vladimir Nabokov--With Digressions," Twentieth Century, CLXVI (December 1959), 444-450.

Hicks, Granville. "American Fiction in 1958," Saturday Review, XLI (December 27, 1958), 11-12.

- Hicks, Granville. "Man of Many Words," Saturday Review, L (January 28, 1967), 31-32.
- , "'Lolita' and Her Problems," Saturday Review, XLI (August 16, 1958), 12, 38.
- Hinchliffe, Arnold P. "Belinda in America," Studi Americani, VI (1960), 339-347.
- "Holier Than Thou," Books and Bookmen, IV (February 1959), 3.
- Hollander, John. "The Perilous Magic of Nymphets," in Richard Kostelanetz, ed. On Contemporary Literature. New York: Avon Books, 1964.
- "Ithaca and 'Lolita,'" Newsweek, LII (November 24, 1958), 114-115.
- James, Henry. The Art of the Novel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950.
- , The Future of the Novel. Edited by Leon Edel. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.
- James, J.K. The Smut Peddlers. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1960.
- Janeway, Elizabeth. "The Tragedy of Man Driven by Desire," NY Times Book Review, August 17, 1958, 5.
- Josipovici, G.D. "Lolita: Parody and the Pursuit of Beauty," Critical Quarterly, VI (Spring 1964), 35-48.
- Kronhausen, Eberhard and Phyllis. Pornography and the Law. New York: Ballantine Books, 1964.
- Lauter, Paul. "'...elementary errors,'" New Republic, CXXXIX (November 3, 1958), 23-24.
- Lawrence, D.H. Sex, Literature and Censorship. Edited by Harry T. Moore. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1953.
- Levin, Bernard. "Why All the Fuss?" The Spectator, No. 6811 (January 9, 1959), 32-33.
- Lewis, R.W.B. The Picaresque Saint. Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1959.
- "'Lolita,'" The Spectator, No. 6815 (February 6, 1959), 192.
- "'Lolita,'" The Spectator, No. 6816 (February 13, 1959), 231.
- "'Lolita,'" The Spectator, No. 6854 (November 6, 1959), 616.

"'Lolita' and the Critics," New Republic, CXXXIX (October 27, 1958), 3.

"'Lolita' in London," Encounter, XII (February 1959), 34.

"'Lolita' in Tunbridge Wells," Time, LXXIII (March 2, 1959), 72.

"Lolita's Creator--Author Nabokov, a 'Cosmic Joker,'" Newsweek, LIX (June 25, 1962), 51-54.

"'Lolita'--Technically Pornographic," Books and Bookmen, IV (March 1959), 3.

Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. London: Jonathan Cape, 1921.

Malcolm, Donald. "Lo, the Poor Nymphet," New Yorker, XXXIV (November 8, 1958), 195-196.

Marceuse, Ludwig. Obscene. Translated by Karen Gershon. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965.

Mendilow, A.A. Time And The Novel. London and New York: Peter Nevill Limited, 1952.

Mitchell, Charles. "Mythic Seriousness in Lolita," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, V (Autumn 1963), 329-343.

Nemerov, Howard. "The Morality of Art," Kenyon Review, XIX (Spring 1957), 313-314, 316-321.

Nabokov, Vladimir. "On a Book Entitled Lolita," Encounter, XII (April 1959), 73-76.

Oliphant, Robert. "Public Voices and Wise Guys," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXXVII (Autumn 1961), 530-535.

Ortega Y Gasset, Jose. "Notes on the Novel," in his The Dehumanization of Art. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, n.d.

Phillips, Elizabeth. "The Hocus-Pocus of Lolita," Literature and Psychology, X (Summer 1960), 97-101.

Pickrel, Paul. Harper's, CCXVII (September 1958), 96-97.

Pitman, Robert. "Lolita," New Statesman, LVII (January 17, 1959), 71.

"Playboy Interview: Vladimir Nabokov," Playboy, XI (January 1964), 35-41, 44-45.

Prescott, Orville. "Books of the Times," NY Times, August 18, 1958, 17.

Pryce-Jones, Alan. "The Fabulist's Worlds: Vladimir Nabokov," in Nona Balakian and Charles Simmons, eds. The Creative Present--Notes on Contemporary American Fiction. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963.

-----, "On 'Lolita,'" Book Week (September 26, 1965), 4, 12, 14.

"Publishers' Hopes of Lolita Test Case," London Times, February 18, 1959, 13.

Rolo, Charles. Atlantic, CCII (September 1958), 78.

Rougemont, Denis de. "Lolita, or Scandal," in his Love Declared --Essays on the Myths of Love. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon Books, 1963.

Rovit, Earl H. Books Abroad, XXXIII (Spring 1959), 160.

Rubin, Louis D. "The Self Recaptured," Kenyon Review, XXV (Summer 1963), 393-415.

Saroyan, Amie R. "Lolita," New Republic, CXXXIX (November 10, 1958), 23.

Schorer, Mark. "Technique as Discovery," in Forms of Modern Fiction. Edited by William Van O'Connor. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1948.

Shepperson, Archibald Bolling. The Novel in Motely. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.

"Sisters Under the Skin?" Time, LXXII (December 29, 1958), 40.

Slonim, Marc. "'Doctor Zhivago' and 'Lolita,'" International Literary Annual, No. 2 (1959), 213-225.

Smith, Peter Duval. "Vladimir Nabokov on His Life and Work," The Listener, LXVIII (November 22, 1962), 856-858.

Stegner, Page. Escape Into Aesthetics: The Art of Vladimir Nabokov. New York: Dial Press, 1966.

Strainchamps, Ethel. "Nabokov's Handling of English Syntax," American Speech, XXXVI (October 1961), 234-235.

Tate, Allen. "Techniques of Fiction," in Forms of Modern Fiction. Edited by William Van O'Connor. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1948.

Teirlinck, Herman. "Notes on Nabokov's Lolita," Literary Review, VII (Spring 1964), 439-442.

"To the End of Night," Time, LXXII (September 1, 1958), 62, 64.

Trilling, Lionel. "The Last Lover--Vladimir Nabokov's 'Lolita,'" Encounter, XI (October 1958), 9-19.

Walbridge, Earl F. Library Journal, LXXXIII (August 1958), 2183.

Watt, Ian. "Realism and the Novel Form," in Approaches to the Novel. Edited by Robert Scholes. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961.

Wellek, Rene, and Austin Warren. "The Nature and Modes of Narrative Fiction," in the Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1956.

West, Paul. The Modern Novel. London: Hutchinson, 1963.

Widmer, Kingsley and Eleanor. Literary Censorship. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1961.

Witham, W. Tasker. The Adolescent in the American Novel--1920-1960. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1964.

Woodruff, Douglas. "'Lolita,'" London Times, January 28, 1959, 9.

Zall, Paul M. "Lolita and Gulliver," Satire Newsletter, III (Fall 1965), 33-37.

B29899